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THESIS

CHINESE CRISIS DECISION MAKING: USING A CYBERNETIC APPROACH TO INTERPRET AND PREDICT BEIJING'S BEHAVIOR UNDER STRESS

by

Nathan A. Feezor

March 2010

Thesis Advisor:	Alice L. Miller
Second Reader:	Christopher P. Twomey

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An accurate understanding of the Chinese decision-making process is critical to anticipating and deescalating Sino-American crises through effective crisis management. Although rational models of decision making have been heavily used to explain state decisions, some outcomes do not fit rational assumptions, leaving questions of state intentions seemingly ambiguous and unanswered. This study uses an organization-centered, cybernetic approach and assumes: 1) that alternatives considered by a government reside in the existing capabilities of the state's institutions, and 2) decision-making outcomes are characterized as governmental actions through organizational routines. After identifying three functional decision-making variables (how a decision-making process manages complexity, deals with uncertainty, and adapts to change), this research tests the general structure and current trends in PRC politics for evidence that Beijing uses cybernetic methods when deciding how to resolve complex problems. Additionally, this study selects five recent near-crisis events (1999 Belgrade embassy bombing, 2001 EP-3 midair collision, 2002-03 SARS outbreak, 2007 PRC anti-satellite test, and 2008 Sichuan earthquake response) for a cross-case analysis of these same three variables in times of crisis. This research offers unique insight in both the applicability of the cybernetic model in PRC analysis as well as expectations of Beijing's future decision making under stress.

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CHINESE CRISIS DECISION MAKING: USING A CYBERNETIC APPROACH TO INTERPRET AND PREDICT BEIJING'S BEHAVIOR UNDER STRESS

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Lieutenant, United States Navy
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASAT	anti-satellite
C3	command, control, and communications
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CDIC	Central Discipline Inspection Commission
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CMC	Central Military Commission
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress
FALSG	Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group
GAD	General Armaments Department
GLD	General Logistics Department
GPD	General Political Department
GSD	General Staff Department
JDAM	joint direct attack munitions
KKV	kinetic kill vehicle
LSG	leading small group
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MND	Ministry of National Defense
MOFTEC	Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation
MR	military region
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPC	National People's Congress
NSDM	national security decision making
PAP	People's Armed Police
PB	Political Bureau or Politburo
PBSC	Politburo Standing Committee
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAAF	People's Liberation Army Air Force
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PPR	pre-planned response
PRC	People's Republic of China

SAF	Second Artillery Force
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SOP	standard operating procedure
TEL	transporter-erector-launcher
UN	United Nations

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE AND RELEVANCE

The purpose of this thesis is to provide greater understanding of the PRC decision-making process so that American policy-makers, military commanders, and intelligence analysts can better interpret and predict Beijing's behavior both under normal circumstances as well as during times of crisis. It pierces the opacity of Chinese politics by systematically applying knowledge of organizational behavior and cybernetic mechanisms to Beijing's decision-making structure and process. Furthermore, it advances the current understanding of Sino-American crisis management by conducting a comparative analysis of the five most significant conflicts over the past decade. For quick reference, many of the key takeaways of this study are provided in the conclusions of Chapter VI and the summary sections of Chapters III, IV, and V.

Research on this topic is important for three reasons. First, the potential costs of Sino-American conflict range from high to incalculable. A healthy relationship between the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC) is critical to the improved welfare, stability, and security of both countries. Over the past four decades, Sino-American relations have become increasingly more complicated and convoluted, engaging a plethora of moving parts in all domains, including social, political-diplomatic, economic, and military. Conflicts that arise between the two countries, if not properly managed, can quickly devolve into cascading sequences of unintended consequences that undermine vital economic and financial cooperation and escalate security tensions in each government's national security organizations. Even without considering that both countries maintain advanced arsenals of weaponry, including weapons of mass destruction, purely economic costs incurred with decreased trade and the potentially destabilizing and damaging effects of surging nationalism to both short and long-term interests of each country elevate the importance of successfully interpreting and predicting the other's decision-making behavior.

Secondly, due to the expansive, evolving government organizations in both the United States and China, as well as to the opacity and complexity of Beijing's leadership decision-making processes, the likelihood of one state misunderstanding the intentions of the other or misinterpreting (or simply missing) the other's signals is greatly increased. That Washington is often surprised or confused about PRC decisions illustrates the lack of adequate knowledge of the Chinese system, its rules, and its routines.

Finally, moments of crisis are especially problematic for Sino-American communication. During Sino-American crises, decision makers on both sides most often failed to see the conflict coming and were therefore unprepared for the intense demands imposed by the complexity and uncertainty of the situation. These moments have the potential to bring the worst as well as the best out in the leadership of each nation, and as mentioned above, the stakes are usually very high. The ability to deescalate a conflict and restore international stability during these moments of crisis largely rests on each country's understanding of the other's decision-making process.

The approach this study employs differs from others of its kind in three substantial ways. First, it makes use of a readily available but little used source of insight—the scholarly knowledge of how organizations work. With this knowledge, it then approaches the problem by seeing China not as a rational actor, but rather as an organization. In doing so, it overcomes a formidable obstacle that most other studies on the topic run into—the opacity of the Chinese system. In much the same way that sight-impaired individuals grow accustomed to the standard features or dimensions of rooms, stairs, or sidewalks that they frequently encounter, this study identifies key features or functions of organizational structure and behavior and applies it to better visualize and predict the nature of a specific subject—Chinese politics. Although some aspects of organizational design may not perfectly fit the intricacies of the PRC system, this study argues for the applicability of examining Beijing in this manner by focusing on key fundamental variables of decision-making processes that exhibit isomorphic qualities among a wide variety of organizations including national leadership structures.

Secondly, this study of Chinese decision making does not rely on assumptions of rationality. Instead, it takes a cybernetic approach based on different decision rules and

organizational routines. As a result, many occurrences in Chinese behavior that the majority of observers have attributed to misjudgment, ignorance, factional conflict, or faulty execution by Chinese leaders are explained as "the expected result of coherent, well-established, normally operating decision processes."[1]

Finally, this study is designed for the operational decision maker and intelligence analyst as well as the scholar. As such, it takes into account that its audience is short on time and typically saturated with other demands, and, therefore, communicates its findings in an easily-accessible, operational format while retaining the rigorous methods, evidence, and documentation of scholarly research.

B. METHOD AND EVIDENCE

The problem is to understand both how and why Chinese leaders make the decisions they do. The hypothesis is that Beijing makes decisions through a combination of cybernetic mechanisms and processes rather than through the widely accepted assumptions and processes of the rational model. First, this study defines the features of the two approaches to decision making that are contrasted here—rational and cybernetic—and frames them as the independent variables of this scientific inquiry.

Secondly, two separate tests are conducted in order to determine which model is more useful in explaining Beijing's decision-making behavior. These tests are both structured along three lines of analysis (also labeled as key functional variables) that typify the core features of both the rational and cybernetic models. These variables are:

- How does Beijing manage complexity?
- How does Beijing deal with uncertainty?
- How does Beijing adapt to change?

The first test takes a broad look at the trends that have shaped Chinese politics over the past thirty years (since the initiation of reforms under Deng Xiaoping). Through content analysis of official policy statements, public announcements, and leadership

[1] John D. Steinbruner, *Some Effects of Decision Procedures on Policy Outcomes: A Series of Experiments Using Policy Games* (Cambridge, MA: Center for International Studies, MIT, 1970), 125.

accounts, several data points are used to characterize the mindset of the current PRC leadership and the nature of the Chinese decision-making process. These data are supplemented by observations of policy actions as well as indications of political reform provided by several veteran analysts of Chinese politics.

The second test proceeds along the same three lines of inquiry and is a comparative study of five crisis cases that have confronted the Chinese government over the past decade. These five cases were chosen because they each represent complex situations that forced Beijing to quickly decide on an acceptable course of action under conditions of risk. All five cases are current enough that most if not all of the current leadership under PRC President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao were intimately involved in the decision-making process. The evidence used to illustrate the nature of Chinese decision making during these crises is drawn from official PRC statements, demands, and responses as well as the insights of several Chinese and American analysts, many of whom were also involved in the crisis management process. The five cases are:

- Accidental U.S. bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade (1999)
- Midair collision of a PRC F-8 and a U.S. EP-3E (2001)
- SARS outbreak (2002-03)
- Unannounced PRC launch of an anti-satellite (ASAT) weapon (2007)
- Sichuan earthquake (2008)

After demonstrating the applicability of the cybernetic model in Chinese decision making, the study concludes with several implications based in cybernetic logic and focused on explaining Beijing's behavior under stress.

C. OUTLINE

This thesis is divided into three sections. The first section establishes the foundations upon which the remainder of the study is based. Following this introduction, Chapter II defines the features of both the rational and cybernetic models. It begins by showing where each model resides in the overall field of choice-based decision-making

research. It then describes and contrasts the features of each model and examines the three functional variables that serve as the principal lines of inquiry in the following two tests. Chapter III describes the Chinese decision-making structure. It establishes the flow of authority and responsibility through the three hierarchies in the Chinese government—the party, military, and state. It examines this structure from both administrative and operational perspectives and from the top levels to the regional and local organs of each bureaucracy.

The second section conducts two separate tests to determine the nature of Beijing's decision-making process. Chapter IV takes a broad view significant trends that have shaped the current character of Chinese politics. Chapter V focuses on the five crisis case studies listed above for evidence supporting one of the two decision-making models. Both tests follow the three lines of inquiry of the key functional variables. Each test ends with a summary of findings.

The final section—Chapter VI—summarizes the key findings of the study. Conclusions are divided into two categories: those pertaining to the use of the cybernetic approach in international relations study, and those pertaining to the nature of Chinese crisis decision making. The study ends with suggestions for fellow intelligence professionals and promising areas for additional research.

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II. CONCEPTUAL DECISION-MAKING MODEL

A. INTRODUCTION

The theories considered in this study share a key assumption: that international relations and the nature of state-to-state interactions are dependent on the choices of involved state governments. Decision makers in their respective governments will be confronted with problems and will consequently have to decide upon a response from a field of options. Depending on what option is chosen and how this action is employed will largely determine the foreign counter-responses and domestic support and will ultimately influence the overall outcome. Yet decision makers are not unitary actors but instead operate within the constraints of a governmental structure and process, no matter how authoritarian the government may be. Therefore, a better understanding of the structure and decision-making process in addition to the actors and environment is critical to predicting policy outcomes. This process with its institutional actors, rules, and unique norms of behavior contains the explanatory power sought in this analysis.

The study of decision making in general has advanced the understanding of how individuals and groups approach problems, determine response options, and execute action. Organizational analysis has yielded significant insights into how large groups of individual actors arrange themselves to accomplish a common mission. The research in this genre has varied from focusing on governmental policy debates to improving corporate business management practices to studying the psychological characteristics of the actual individuals making choices. Much of the theoretical work in decision-making theory has occurred since the beginnings of the Cold War—a time when risks were abundant, potential consequences catastrophic, and involved states were forced confront unstructured problems in complex environments with less than complete information (many times with hardly any specific, relevant intelligence at all). This thesis recognizes that although the Cold War is over and the chance of large-scale nuclear war is more remote, many of these fundamental decision making conditions still characterize many state-to-state interactions including those of China and the United States. Out of necessity, an understanding of decision making and organizational design emerged in the

past to fill the gap of available knowledge. In light of the opaque nature of Chinese internal politics and the potential high costs of relationship decline, the application of useful, relevant decision theory is required now in order to interpret and predict Beijing's behavior. Although outside observers may not have sufficient information to place names, faces, and personal preferences with most seats of power in the Chinese central government, significant insight can be gained by examining the PRC system through the accumulated lessons learned from decades of decision making and organizational study.

This chapter provides a review of literature in the history of decision-making theory and establishes a theoretical spectrum of choice-based models. It then compares two principal approaches to decision making—the rational actor model and the cybernetic model—in their features and overall applicability in the complex, risky, rapidly-changing environment that now confronts international relations analysis.

B. REVIEW OF DECISION-MAKING LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review on decision-making theory is threefold. First, it orients the reader with an overview of different models currently in use in decision-making science and highlights some of the prominent scholars that have shaped this field. Secondly, it shows the inherent connections between decision-making theory and the larger studies of political science and international relations. Thirdly, it shows where a variety of approaches is positioned on a spectrum of choice-based models (Figure 1). While the focus of this study is simply to contrast the applicability of the two fundamental models of this spectrum (rational and cybernetic), it acknowledges that other models that blend these two approaches have been constructed and practiced with varying levels of success depending on the situation being analyzed. This study does not deny the overall validity of any of these models (which are helpful in certain contexts or situations) but instead seeks only to demonstrate the enhanced utility of the cybernetic model in explaining Chinese leadership decision making.

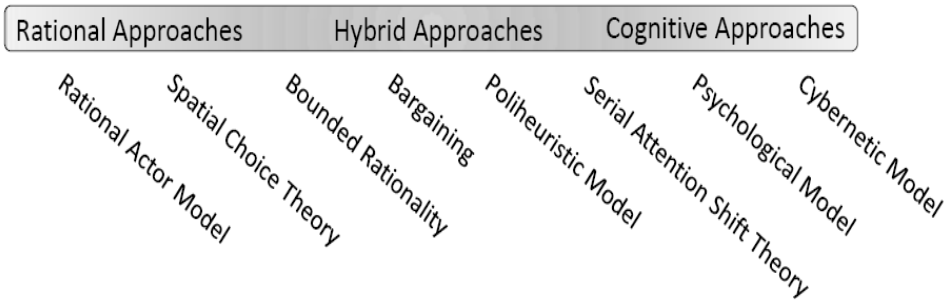

Figure 1. Spectrum of Choice-Based Models

Choice-based models have been used to explain state behavior and international relations since Thucydides chronicled the interactions of the city-states of Athens, Sparta, and others during the Peloponnesian War[2] and Chinese strategist Sun Tzu explained to regional warlords the art of engaging an adversary through effective decision making.[3] These models focus on the national decision-making process as the key to understanding policy outcomes in many domains including economics,[4] politics, sociology, and psychology.

The *rational actor* model has long dominated the decision-making assumptions of international relations and accompanies realist arguments in the works of George Kennan,[5] Hans Morgenthau,[6] Thomas Schelling,[7] and Henry Kissinger.[8] It assumes that decision makers make choices according to which option best supplies the greatest utility. Schelling concisely defined the rational model of choice by claiming that at its foundation resides "the assumption of rational behavior—not just intelligent behavior,

2 Robert B. Strassler, ed., *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

3 Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Thomas Cleary (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2000).

4 Economics have largely contributed to the growth of these studies. Adam Smith helped to shape the trajectory of global economics in the late 18th century by arguing that the decision-making processes of states could be equated to the choices of individual households. See Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations* (New York: Random House, 1937).

5 George F. Kennan, "Morality and Foreign Policy," (1985) in *At a Century's Ending: Reflections, 1982–1995*, ed. George F. Kennan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 270–279.

6 Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, 4th Edition (New York: Knopf, 1970).

7 Thomas Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960).

8 Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994).

but of behavior motivated by a conscious calculation of advantages, a calculation that in turn is based on an explicit and internally consistent value system."[9] Veteran diplomat Kissinger expressly praised the rational statecraft as the clearest articulation of a country's unitary vision "unfettered by the morass of governmental politics."[10] Much of the recent work in rational actor theory has focused on creating game theory models that accomplish simple rational choice simulations in structured environments.[11] One of the strongest criticisms of game theory has been that simplified models of state-to-state interactions fail to grasp the true complexity of the multi-dimension problems that face decision makers in reality—rarely are conflicts structured so neatly into a simple choice between two mutually-exclusive alternatives.[12] In response, *spatial choice theory* conceptualizes the array of various options as a "space" where the chosen action is a point that represents a chosen equilibrium along multiple axes at once.[13] Confronting another serious criticism of the rational actor model, Herbert Simon forwards the idea of *bounded rationality*, which acknowledges that although rationality is still the core principle of decision making, rational choices are performed within the constraints of the environmental framework.[14]

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[9] Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, 4.

[10] Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh, and the Problems of Peace, 1812–1822* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), 329, as cited in Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, Second Edition (New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, Inc., 1999), 29.

[11] J. Von Neumann and O. Morgenstern, *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*, 2nd Edition (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1947); and Kenneth Arrow, *Social Choice and Individual Values* (New York: John Wiley, 1951) as cited in Xinsheng Liu, *Modeling Bilateral International Relations: The Case of U.S.-China Interactions* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 11. For rational games that focus on conflict and crisis management, see Lewis F. Richardson, *Arms and Insecurity* (Pittsburgh: Boxwood Press, 1960). For rational games that focus on cooperation see Robert Axelrod, "The Emergence of Cooperation among Egoists," *American Political Science Review* 75 (June 1981): 306–18. See Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976) for an examination of the various levels of analysis in rational modeling.

[12] Peter Bennett, "Modeling Decisions in International Relations: Game Theory and Beyond," *Mershon International Studies Review* 39 (1995): 19–52.

[13] Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957); Clifton T. Morgan, "A Spatial Model of Crisis Bargaining," *International Studies Quarterly* 28 (December 1984): 407–26.

[14] Herbert A. Simon, *Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-making Processes in Administrative Organization* (New York: MacMillan, 1947).

Accompanying many institutionalist theories of international relations are models of decision making that, while continuing to see states are unitary actors, view state choices as being shaped by the state's domestic politics—outcomes are seen as the products of rational *bargaining* between various institutions.[15]

Approaching the center of the spectrum illustrated above from the cognitive side, an alternative school of thought was invigorated in the mid-20th century. At that time, many critics of the dominant rational model, upon observing prominent historical events that by all accounts did not adhere to principles of rational decision making (including for example the 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor as well as the 1967 Egyptian Army's mobilization against a superiorly armed Israel), were motivated to contest its validity.[16] These observations led some scholars to reason that states do not always act rationally—that the limits of human intellectual capacity (or even a computer's analytical capacity for that matter) are inherently incapable of processing the infinite range of options available in confronting any problem.[17] The cognitive family of models, consequently, seeks to explain decision making by observing the process rather than the expected outcome, realizing that all choices are made under some form of cognitive constraint. As Michael Doyle points out, "state structures matter: the structure of their domestic governments and the values and views of their citizens affect their behavior in international affairs."[18]

The *cybernetic* model (the approach used here) theorizes that a decision maker's access to information and response options are restricted to and determined by the institutional rules and organizational routines currently in existence. Consequently, understanding the structure and identity of institutions within the organization and the

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[15] Robert Keohane, "Institutional Theory and the Realist Challenge after the Cold War," in *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate*, ed. David Baldwin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). The decision-making models of "rational actor," "bounded rationality", and "bargaining" are compared in Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing, *Conflict among Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making, and Systems Structure in International Crises* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977).

[16] John D. Steinbruner, *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision: New Dimensions of Political Analysis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), 47.

[17] Charles E. Lindblom, "The Science of "Muddling Through," *Public Administration Review* 19:2 (1959): 79–88.

[18] Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 39. Also see Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism, and Socialism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 211, 383, 420.

standard operating procedures they employ when perceiving and responding to a problem is the basis for predicting the state's behavior in the international environment.[19] C*ognitive psychology* models oppose assumptions of rationality by focusing on the limited cognitive processes and psychological tendencies of the individual decision makers.[20] The *serial attention shift* model explores the role of leaders' limited attention spans and argues that decisions are partially determined by what aspects the decision maker's attention was focused on just prior to actually making the choice.[21] Some scholars of *poliheuristic* methods combine both psychological and rational methods in multi-step, hybrid models.[22]

C. CHOOSING A MODEL: RATIONAL OR CYBERNETIC?

Although, as illustrated above, there is a wide spectrum of choice-based theories of decision making, the poles of this assortment are the rational and the cybernetic models—everything in between is some mixture of both. In order to demonstrate the under-appreciated value of the cybernetic model as contrasted with the heavily used rational approach, this study begins with a side-by-side appraisal of both. Once the key features of each are understood, the specific nature of Chinese decision making can be ascertained in the tests that follow. This appraisal is framed around four fundamental characteristics and three functional variables (refer to Table 1).

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[19] Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision,* 145. Steinbruner, *Cybernetic Theory of Decision,* 57. William Ross Ashby, *An Introduction to Cybernetics* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1956).

[20] Gordon M. Becker and Charles G. McClintock, "Value: Behavioral Decision Theory," *Annual Review of Psychology,* 18 (1967): 239–286. For discussion on cognitive decision-making "short-cuts" or heuristics, see Richard K. Herrmann and Michael P. Fischerkeller, "Beyond the Enemy Image and Spiral Model: Cognitive—Strategic Research after the Cold War," *International Organization* 49 (1995): 415–50. For emphasis of the role of individual perceptions and motivations, see Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*. For individual tendencies in estimating and responding to risk, see Jack S. Levy, "An Introduction to Prospect Theory," *Political Psychology* 13:2 (1992).

[21] Bryan D. Jones, *Reconceiving Decision-Making in Democratic Politics: Attention, Choice, and Public Policy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994).

[22] Alex Mintz, "How Do Leaders Make Decisions? A Poliheuristic Perspective," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48:1 (2004): 3–13.

Table 1. Contrasting Variables of the Rational Actor and Cybernetic Models

Feature	Rational Actor	Cybernetic
	Fundamental Characteristics	
Defining Principle	Rationality	Organizational rule-following
Basic Unit of Analysis	States; government action = choice	Organizations; government action = organizational output
Method of Logic	Logic of Consequences	Logic of Appropriateness
Method of Search	Holistic, exhaustive, maximizing, goal-driven, compensatory comparison of alternatives, order-insensitive	Non-holistic, sequential, satisficing, failure-driven, non-compensatory comparison of alternatives, order-sensitive
	Key Functional Variables	
Managing Complexity	Central leadership articulates goals in form of "blueprint" for exact replication; Consistent emulation of outcome preferences as per the model at all levels of organization in order to create the desired solution	Collective leadership responds in form of "recipe"—sequence of pre-planned actions; Simple "servomechanisms" for limiting the attention of the organization to a few key variables; Fragmentation of issue to specialized institutions with unique capabilities
Dealing with Uncertainty	Strive for complete, accurate information of all alternatives to minimize uncertainty; Risk evaluations are subjective, yet unbiased estimates included in expected utility calculation	Avoiding having to compare the value of multiple alternatives limits uncertainty; Range of options is limited by the current organizational capabilities; First option that meets the need is chosen
Adapting to Change	Causal learning; future-dependent; change occurs instantaneously to leaders vision, goals & values	Experiential learning; history-dependent; change occurs incrementally or with sporadic, failure-induced bursts

1. Fundamental Characteristics

The rational actor and cybernetic models are first contrasted according to basic yet highly determinate conditions that shape the structure and method by which each model then performs the three key functions that are later examined. These fundamental characteristics are the defining principles of "rational" and "cybernetic" mechanisms, the unit of analysis upon which each model focuses, the logic or reasoning that underlies each, and the criteria by which each model searches for solutions.

a. Defining Principle

Rational Actor: The defining principle of the rational actor model is a reliance on rationality to determine choice. However, due to the frequent and often improper use of the term "rational" in the discourses of international relations and political science, it is necessary to begin an examination of this model by defining the term and contrasting it to the expanded meaning it has often assumed when connected to the rational choice theory.

By one dictionary, "rational" is associated to something being done in accordance with reason or logic.[23] Common synonyms of rational are lucid, balanced, sane, normal, cogent, and coherent. From the definition itself, the rational theory takes on a normative appearance—that it is the way decisions *should* be made. This understanding of the term was reinforced by its early use to describe economic behavior—that any *sane, normal* individual leading his or her household would choose from among all the possible options the outcome that will maximize his potential utility. Yet even though the common sense appeal of the concept has remained attached to the term as it has spread from the economic domain to the political and international relations domains, the underlying conditions that support its usage in explaining decision-making behavior are less attainable in the real world than may be assumed. In short, just because a chosen outcome may not be deemed "rational" by rational theory does not mean that it is not equally or even more "acceptable" as a policy decision.

[23]Christine A. Lindberg, ed., *The Oxford American College Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1126.

The term "rational" as it is used to define the rational actor theory of decision making more describes a *process* of deciding on a certain outcome than it judges the suitability of any particular outcome. Although a "rational" choice is seen as being the choice that provides the greatest utility, "rationality" is the process of consciously contemplating all possible alternatives, comparing the utility of all options, and choosing the one outcome that will most successfully achieve the objectives of the decision maker. It is this defining process that makes the rational choice model susceptible to criticism. As many opponents have pointed out, complete contemplation of all possible options requires perfect knowledge of all possible alternatives. This includes not only the options that differ a great deal from each other, but also all the options that differ only slightly from each other—creating in most cases an infinite number of possible alternatives to match even the simplest of problems. As experienced in the real world, when faced with a simple problem, it is more likely to not have enough information than to have perfect, comprehensive knowledge. When faced with complex problems, it is impossible to have perfect information to even identify the infinite possible outcomes much less predict the unforeseen first, second, of third order consequences of any particular course of action.

Accomplishing a choice in the manner demanded in the rational actor model requires an actor to complete a rigorous comparison of values between a diverse set of possible outcomes. However while this can be accomplished more readily in economics where prices and exchange rates can standardize values across baskets of diverse goods, when translating the rational process to politics, there are many situations where finding a standard unit of measure can be difficult. What is the accurate unit of utility when assessing national security? Number of troops … strategic partnerships … size of defense budget? Furthermore, assuming a measure of security could be determined, how could it be objectively compared to the value of economic modernization or social development or any one of many other dimensions of the political environment? As already illustrated, there is more to the principle of rationality within the rational actor model than at first meets the eye.

Cybernetic Model: Cybernetics is the study of automatic control mechanisms in both machine as well as human systems. The defining principle of the

cybernetic model is *organizational rule*—the ability of a collection of organizations to self-regulate and problem-solve through predetermined programs of action. The institution performing a certain function is engineered to automatically sense when performance is not meeting acceptable standards and to respond by enacting an appropriate routine to return performance to acceptable standards. Overall, an organization completes a multitude of complex tasks by managing an assortment of specialized institutions. The decision maker selects an outcome not by creating it, but by turning on or off certain existing capabilities.

Some of the earliest research in cybernetics took place in medical science and biology where it has been used to explain the intricacies of human anatomy including the body's ability to sense an injury and clot a wound[24] as well as the repeatedly successful behavior of simple creatures like honeybees or ants.[25] Its usefulness, however, extends even into common, everyday decision making. One example of a cybernetic process is seen in the baseball player that is confronting a skillful pitcher on the mound. As the ball is released, the batter has to quickly decide how to respond. If one assumed that the batter is an analytical decision maker acting on rational choice, then one would have to determine all the possible options that the batter must choose from. Imagine, for instance, that this pitcher has demonstrated three pitches (the curve ball, the breaking ball, and the fastball), the batter has three swings (the low swing, level swing, and check swing), and the ball can go any of three locations in the field (left field, center field, right field) at three possible distances (bunt, line drive, or deep). In order to compare all options and calculate the single course of action that will bring the maximum utility, the batter would have reviewed a total of 81 possible combinations prior to responding (and even this is a simplified version of the infinite variety of possible options available). This is clearly not the process used by any successful batter since the time required to complete the analytical calculation could easily have taken a good portion of entire game not to mention resulted in an easy strikeout. However, the batter, thinking cybernetically,

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[24] William Ross Ashby was a prominent British psychiatrist and pioneer in the field of cybernetics. See William Ross Ashby, *Design for a Brain: The Origin of Adaptive Behavior,* Second Edition (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1960).

[25] Steinbruner, *Cybernetic Theory of Decision,* 48.

can quickly narrow the range of possible options that he has to contemplate to only the ones that fit the nature of the situation—as he sees ball leave the hand of the pitcher, or judges the current situation on the field, many of the above courses of action may quickly be determined inappropriate. The batter then acts according to routines that have been rehearsed, with a mind to lessons learned from successful (or not so successful) previous experiences in similar circumstances as well as the rules of the game. The batter can respond in time through this simplified decision-making process and the game goes on. In the same way, cybernetic processes allow national policy decision makers to solve complex problems by using organizational rules and standard operating procedures.

b. Basic Unit of Analysis

Rational Actor Model: Although the principle of rationality can be applied to the decision-making process of individuals as well as groups of individuals, in international relations, the rational actor model is typically applied to the unitary action of a nation as a whole. In this construct, *states* are the primary actors and governmental action is seen as choice—the expression of a single view of national purpose and intention—an action "chosen as a calculated solution to a strategic problem."[26] Most people either explicitly or implicitly apply the rational actor model when describing the behavior of other states. As some scholars observe, "the assumption that occurrences in foreign affairs are the *acts of nations* has been so fundamental to thinking about such problems that the underlying model has rarely been recognized."[27] This is commonly evident in the vernacular used to describe world affairs by using statements such as "China is trying to do this" or "Washington has decided to do that."

Cybernetic Model: This model sees the primary actors as the *organizations* and governmental action as organizational output. The decision makers' "choices" are limited to the existing repertoire of organizational capabilities and constrained by the flexibility of standard organizational routines and rules that are

[26] Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 15.

[27] Ibid., 15–16.

inherent to any organization.[28] Although the cybernetic approach acknowledges that individuals make up these organizations, it aggregates individual behavior to the level of the organization that defines the overall identity of the group. This model differs from other bureaucratic bargaining models by not assuming the principle of rational choice or seeing outcomes as spoils from competitive bouts between institutions and instead focusing on the role of existing organizational capabilities and programs in the decision-making process.

c. Logic

Rational Actor Model: The reasoning of the rational model is the *logic of consequence.* This concept assumes that decisions are evaluated based upon their expected consequences and ordered according to preferences. These preferences are based upon the future desired end-state of the decision maker, typically expressed in the form of goals or strategic objectives. As long-time scholar of decision-making theory James March observes, this logic proceeds through a series of four questions the decision maker must answer:

1) What determines the alternatives that I am to consider?

2) What are the possible consequences and probability of those consequences occurring with all of these alternatives?

3) How valuable are the predicted consequences of each alternative?

4) How should I choose one of these alternatives in terms of value?[29]

Cybernetic Model: The reasoning employed in the cybernetic model is the *logic of appropriateness.* Whereas rational decision makers seek to match actions to the desired consequences, cybernetic decision makers strive to match rules and identities appropriate to the situation to the problem in order to create a solution. The rules and identities that it chooses from to create that solution are present in the unique institutions within the organization. East institution is created to perform a unique task. Each

[28] Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision,* 144–46.

[29] James G. March, *A Primer on Decision Making: How Decisions Happen* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 3–4.

institution or part of the organization thus develops a unique understanding of how it can and should contribute to the overall mission of the state through its respective capability and desire for autonomy and resources. Unique organizational identities are created and perpetuated throughout the membership of that group and operations are conducted according to norms of appropriate behavior. The decision maker, when applying the logic of appropriateness, is confronted with three questions:

1) What kind of situation is this?
2) What is my organizational role or identity?
3) In this organizational capacity, what is it appropriate to do—what rules should I follow in confronting this situation?[30]

d. Search

Rational Actor Model: Search is the process of dedicating attention to retrieve and process information on alternative courses of action prior to making a choice. Since the principle of rationality requires that all possible options be evaluated in terms of expected utility in order to find the single alternative that will bring the most preferred outcome, attention must be devoted to a *holistic* search of available options. This is a value-*maximizing* search that seeks the one best option no matter how many alternatives are included in the field of possible choices. In this search, goals are the preferences against which alternatives are measured. Additionally, the rational search is a *compensatory* search. If a certain alternative has a low expected utility in one dimension (defined as an organizing theme such as political, military, or economic) but simultaneously a high expected utility in another, then one balances out the other. The rational search is also *order-insensitive.* Since *all* alternatives are being objectively considered, then regardless of what order the options are presented to the decision maker, the choice will be the same.[31]

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[30] March, *A Primer on Decision Making*, 58.

[31] Xinsheng Liu, "The Poliheuristic Theory of Decision and the Cybernetic Theory of Decision: A Comparative Examination," in *Integrating Cognitive and Rational Theories of Foreign Policy Decision Making*, ed. Alex Mintz (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 151.

Cybernetic Model: Cybernetic search is *non-holistic* since all possible alternatives are not considered when making a choice. Instead of finding the single best solution, decision makers search for the first solution that meets the qualifications needed to resolve the situation—a "*satisficing"* search.[32] Goals serve as "trigger points" rather than specific outcome preferences, leading some to characterize the search pattern as *thermostatic.* When a thermostat (a cybernetic servomechanism) detects that performance is not meeting the acceptable limits, the search function to restore equilibrium in initiated. When the room temperature meets acceptable standards, the thermostat halts performance. Unlike the rational process, the thermostat at no time calculates a specific, optimal degree of temperature in between limits as a goal.[33] Other ways to describe this search pattern is *failure-driven* and *success-driven*. Additionally, the cybernetic search is *non-compensatory.* Since comparative value calculations are avoided, a high value in one dimension cannot compensate for a low value in another. If value conflicts arise in the process of the cybernetic search, the alternative is simply determined to not meet the necessary criteria and is discarded.[34] Cybernetic search is also *order-sensitive*. Since the decision maker is not conducting a comprehensive search and instead is willing to adopt the first alternative that meets the demands of the situation, the order in which the alternatives are presented can result in a dramatic difference in the specific nature of the accepted course of action and, consequently, the characteristics of the ultimate outcome.[35]

2. Key Functional Variables

Any decision-making process suitable for the real world of foreign policy and international relations must function in an environment of complexity, uncertainty, and change. Observing how the rational actor and cybernetic models cope with these conditions provides the framework of inquiry for determining the applicability of either model in explaining Chinese crisis decision making.

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[32] March, *A Primer on Decision Making*, 19.

[33] Ibid., 28.

[34] Steinbruner, *Cybernetic Theory of Decision*, 64.

[35] Xinsheng, "Comparative Examination," 151.

a. Managing Complexity

According to well-known professor and pioneer in cybernetic theory John Steinbruner, a complex problem includes the following conditions:

1) Two or more values are affected by the decision.
2) There is a zero-sum relationship between two conflicting alternatives—more of one means less of the other.
3) Imperfect information increases situational uncertainty.
4) Decision-making power and responsibility is dispersed over multiple actors or organizational units.[36]

The foreign policy decision-making domain is a complex environment that involves decisions that have the potential to affect many dimensions simultaneously. As the world has become more intricately interconnected, rarely are problems and potential solutions structured and controlled as simply as they are in the laboratory. There is never adequate information to eliminate the element of risk.

Two fundamental aspects of complexity are instrumental in grasping the demands this condition places on decision makers. The *problem of scale* describes complexity that exceeds in volumn the available decision-making capabilities of the organization. The *problem of scope* describes complexity that exceeds the existing expertise of the decision-making capabilities of the organization.

Rational Actor Model: The rational model confronts the problem of complexity by perpetuating and enacting central goals or objectives in its value calculations at all levels of the government. Since the model would most accurately describe a state's decision-making process if only a single actor's value calculations were involved in the identification and selection of the desired course of action, any inclusion of additional decision makers in the process threatens the applicability of the model unless these new members act according to the identically same views as the central leadership. A unified purpose is communicated from the central leadership to the other

[36] Steinbruner, *Cybernetic Theory of Decision*, 16.

levels of the decision-making process and guides *consistent* application of rationality.[37] Decision theory scholar Herbert Simon observes that the rational decision maker views situations (both current and future) as "states" of reality. From this pictured desired end state the unitary rational actor (the architect) creates a model of behavior that functions as a replica for bringing the desired outcome into being—an exact blueprint for all parts of the organization to emulate in their individual decision-making processes.[38]

This model suffers from two critical weaknesses when managing increasingly complex problems. First, if the government confronts the problem of scale by expanding the number of decision makers, it becomes vulnerable. The more people or institutions that are involved in the process, the greater the chances of miscommunication or for personal interests to motivate unique actions or value selection that are not in accordance with the central blueprint, thereby threatening the cohesive, unitary response of the state as a whole. Secondly, when confronting the problem of scope, since the model assumes that perfect information is necessary in order to make a "maximizing" choice, as issues become more numerous, diverse, complicated, and inter-related, the demand for information and calculation can easily exceed the human or organization's ability to obtain and process it, leading to a breakdown of the rational choice principle, perfect emulation of the blueprint, and overall inapplicability of the rational actor model.

Cybernetic Model: Instead of pursuing the rational method of countering increasing complexity with increasingly elaborate strategies and information systems, the cybernetic model overcomes complexity through *simplicity*. This model uses the organization itself as a way to establish a variety of limited, tightly-focused "servomechanisms" for monitoring the environment and problem solving. A servomechanism is any mechanism that uses self-assessed feedback to activate and deactivate a regulatory function. As Simon described, instead of being like an exact blueprint or replica of the desired outcome, the cybernetic approach is likened to a recipe in that the decision maker (the cook) responds to problems by enacting a sequence of steps to reach a solution. Reality is envisioned as a *process* rather than as any specific

[37] Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 17.

[38] Steinbruner, *Cybernetic Theory of Decision*, 55.

state of being.[39] Exact emulation of central goals is not required so long as the institutions with their unique capabilities perform according to the appropriate rules and routines for which they have been established.

The cybernetic model confronts the problem of scale by limiting the attention and interest of each component of the organization to only a few critical variables.[40] Each institution monitors its respective variable or variables for signs that performance is not remaining within tolerable limits. A prescribed action (based on the specific capabilities of the institution) is enacted and the situation is continuously monitored until the performance returns the variable to acceptable values, at which point performance is decreased and slack is introduced into the system. By having these cybernetic structures *hierarchically* arranged throughout the organization, institutional needs as well as overall national interests are served.[41]

The model confronts the problem of scope by *fragmenting* decision-making authority and responsibility among a large group of specialized institutions and individuals. Since problems as dealt with as they occur, when a problem arises, a particular institution that is best suited to understand and handle the given problem is expected to advise leaders on suitable alternatives for restoring equilibrium to the variable in question. By having a diverse group of institutions that manage problems in their own respective areas of expertise, the variety of potential issues that may be expected to arise in the complex environment of the national policy domain can all be handled with knowledgeable attention. Since this process involves a greater numbers of individuals sharing central decision-making responsibilities, cybernetic organizations exhibit *collective leadership* methods where subject matter experts often enjoy significant political influence through their consultative connections.

A weakness of utilizing this method of decision making includes having to act within the limited repertoire of existing organizational capabilities. In addition, since

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[39] Steinbruner, *Cybernetic Theory of Decision*, 55.

[40] Ashby, *Design for a Brain*, 62.

[41] Steinbruner, *Cybernetic Theory of Decision*, 59.

each institution is governed by the rules inherent to its own identity, as each institution strives to survive, there is an increased chance that organizational competition and advocacy bias will shape the overall outcome in less that beneficial ways.

b. Dealing with Uncertainty

An uncertain situation is one that involves an element of risk. Risk is the possibility (or probability) that something that is undesired or unpredicted will occur as a result of an initiated action. Risk is also defined as an exposure to danger. Therefore, it follows that uncertainty in decision making is a result of less than perfect information and hazardous situations where the potential costs of failure are high.

Rational Actor Model: In the laboratory, the rational model treats uncertainty as a statistical problem.[42] In expected value calculations, each possible alternative is multiplied by the estimated probability it will be the single best choice. However, real world decisions are seldom structured this way and more often include alternatives that have either infrequently (or never) occurred and therefore are difficult to assess.[43] As a result, most rational theorists have adopted the concept of *subjective probability*—that the intuitive estimates of risk among alternatives can serve as an adequate measure of uncertainty in value calculations. This approach also assumes that subjective risk estimates will be updated as new information becomes available.[44]

As has been observed, this method of assessing uncertainty is quite shapeless, and "the specificity necessary for any serious explanation or prediction of an actual event therefore must be worked out *ad hoc* for any given application."[45] Having such a formless process for estimating risk further illustrates the underlying theme of the rational model as a whole—the effort to have perfect information on all alternatives so that the optimal choice is obvious and uncertainty is minimal.

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[42] Steinbruner, *Cybernetic Theory of Decision*, 32.

[43] Ibid., 33.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., 35.

Cybernetic Model: This approach acknowledges the difficulty (or impossibility) of having all the information that is necessary to analytically calculate uncertainty in real world situations and escapes this problem by avoiding direct outcome calculations altogether. The cybernetic decision maker does not pursue a predetermined state of reality or optimal choice and instead simply evaluates whether the available alternatives are satisfactory to solve the problem. The information process within the organization generates the options that are appropriate for the situation—there is no need for an exhaustive search. "Cybernetic mechanisms which achieve uncertainty control do so by focusing the decision process on a few incoming variables while eliminating entirely any serious calculation of probable outcomes."[46] Any information that is not relevant to the established organizational routines already available is ignored. The only information that affects the decision maker enters through the designed feedback channels of the cybernetic mechanism itself. Since available information is limited, and alternatives are confined to the organizational capabilities and SOPs that already exist, uncertainty is minimized.

c. Adapting to Change

For any decision-making model to remain applicable in a real world environment it must be able to adapt to changes through a process of learning.

Rational Actor Model: As discussed above, the rational model includes in its value calculation of alternatives any new information that emerges in the process. Since new information may alter the causal flow of the outcome by changing the value of a particular alternative, this is labeled *causal learning*.[47] Causal learning allows the rational decision maker to include in the working model any environmental phenomena that was previously excluded—a process called horizontal expansion. It also allows measures of value of alternatives to be altered in order to achieve higher-level goals—upward expansion. Causal learning accepts a process of "iterative cycles of analysis" through which decision makers expect the "gradual development of analytic calculations

[46] Steinbruner, *Cybernetic Theory of Decision*, 66.

[47] Ibid., 41.

in specific issue areas."[48] It remains focused on aspirations for the future state of reality (*future-dependent*) and constantly chooses from all options the best way to reach that goal.[49] Change, therefore, can occur as significantly or insignificantly, rapidly or slowly, as the objectives of the central leadership shift in accordance with their vision of the desired end state of being. Theoretically, this process of change occurs *instantaneously* and smoothly in step with leadership perceptions.

Cybernetic Model: Cybernetic decision makers adapt to their environments in a very different way called *experiential learning*—a process where interpretations of past experiences shape the appropriateness of organizational routines, rules, and identities which in turn affect the capabilities and alternatives available in the decision maker's repertoire. In this way, experiential learning is *history-dependent*—"the past is seen as imposing itself on the present through retention of experience in routines."[50] Changes are made in the rules of the organization instead of its strategy.

Observations of experiential learning in national policy domains have been foundational in studies on the *incremental* nature of changes that occur in bureaucratic routines over time.[51] Often described as "muddling through," the cybernetic organization changes gradually in small steps with major change occurring only sporadically when a failure demonstrates that institutional performance is unacceptable.

D. SUMMARY

This chapter has examined the contours of the two decision-making approaches being tested in this study—the rational and cybernetic models. With the variables now defined, the next chapter will lay the foundations of an analysis of Chinese decision making by describing the structure, actors, and flow of authority in the organization.

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[48] Steinbruner, *Cybernetic Theory of Decision*, 43.

[49] March, *A Primer on Decision Making*, 79.

[50] Ibid., 80.

[51] Lindblom, "Science of Muddling Through."

III. PRC DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

A. INTRODUCTION

The Chinese government is an intensely organized, hierarchical system shaped by both formal and informal command relationships. An understanding of the building blocks of this complex political system is necessary prior to further testing the system for the applicability of any specific decision-making approach or realizing relevant insight into Beijing's decision-making behavior.

B. NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE

The power and authority of the Chinese government when responding to national security issues is fundamentally contained in three vertical sectors: the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) apparatus, the military headed by the Central Military Commission (CMC), and the state government apparatus. These vertical hierarchies extend downward into central, provincial, prefectural, county, and township levels.

Figure 2. Party, State, and Military Hierarchies in the PRC Structure

1. Party Decision-Making Apparatus

The CCP retains the ultimate control over national security decision-making mechanisms in the Chinese government. Mao Zedong recognized in his writings from 1938 that "Every Communist must grasp the truth, 'Political Power grows out of the barrel of the gun.' Our principle is that the Party commands the gun, and the gun must

never be allowed to control the Party."[52] Although some specific aspects of Chinese civil-military relations are opaque to an outside observer, the party formally maintains power over the national security domain with key positions in the decision-making process being held solely by high-level party officials.[53] As is also quickly apparent in an examination of the party, state, and military areas of responsibility, much of the potential bureaucratic conflict at the top levels of the government is avoided by having the same group of high-level party officials in multiple positions at once spanning the entire structure. China unquestionably remains a party-government.

The following discussion of the party apparatus is divided into four parts: 1) the top level of the CCP as embodied in the National Party Congress and the Party Central Committee, 2) the operational core of the party decision-making structure in the Political Bureau and the Politburo Standing Committee, 3) the CCP staff system principally contained in the Secretariat and General Office, and 4) the Leading Small Group.

a. National Party Congress and Party Central Committee

The CCP is a hierarchically arranged, Leninist-style organization with multiple tiers of party cadre. The National Party Congress is the largest of the party organs, comprising fifteen hundred or more members that meet every five years to debate major policy initiatives that require overall consensus. Although this is the seat of legitimacy and authority in the Chinese government, its function could most readily be compared to that of a party national convention in the United States. While it is instrumental in establishing the policy platform of the central leadership and elevating members to the Central Committee, it lacks an operational role in the day-to-day business of the country. At the 17th Party Congress, which met 15–21 October 2007, the primary items of business were to review the work of the previous congress, amend the CCP

[52] Mao Zedong, "Problems of War and Strategy," 6 November 1938 as cited in Dennis J. Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21st Century* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 6.

[53] This is not to say that top military leaders do not have significant power for indeed the PLA, although occupying far fewer seats in the top party meetings, still has substantial influence in the shaping, interpreting, and implementing national security decisions. However, the CCP remains overall in charge.

constitution to reflect the adoption of Hu Jintao's "Scientific Development concept," and to select the 17th Central Committee membership.

The second level of the party organization is the Central Committee, a body of several hundred members that meets a couple times a year to review high-level policy initiatives and to make appointments to other key leadership bodies. Most of the members on the Central Committee hold other more operationally-significant political positions in the government as well. For the most part, this body discusses and announces policies without deciding upon them[54] and overlooks the work of the Political Bureau whose membership it appoints. The first plenum of the 17th Central Committee reappointed Hu Jintao as the party general secretary and appointed a new Political Bureau, Standing Committee, Secretariat, and Central Military Commission.

In addition to the Politburo, the Central Committee is organized into four functional Central Committee departments to handle various issue areas at the national level. These are the Organization department (responsible for personnel appointments), the Propaganda department (responsible for media, education, and political image), the United Front department (responsible for relations with non-communist parties and associations in Chinese society), and the International Liaison department (responsible for political relations with other communist parties).[55] Two additional organizations included in the core functions of the Central Committee are the Policy Research Office and the General Office, which are discussed in more detail below under the party staff system. The heads of these organizations are also high-ranking members of the Politburo and, in addition, may be members of the Secretariat. In practice, the work of these departments is under the direct supervision of the CCP general secretary and supports the decision-making processes of the Politburo and its Standing Committee.

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[54] Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China: From Revolution Through Reform,* Second Edition (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2004), 174.

[55] Ibid., 175.

b. Politburo and Politburo Standing Committee

The first layer of the party organization that exercises an operational role in the national security decision-making process is the Political Bureau (Politburo or PB). Considered the party headquarters; it is presided over by the party general secretary and typically has from fourteen to twenty-four members. Most of these members are part of the highest tier of party leadership and serve in multiple functions throughout the government. Press reports since the 16th Party Congress in November 2002 as well as statements by retired Politburo members have indicated that the PB meets once each month for a *collective* discussion on issues related to the overall direction of party affairs in China.[56] Considering the gravity of certain issues, the Politburo is the ultimate decision making body for certain items formally listed within the purview of lower-level organizations such as the Central Military Commission including "questions concerning war, armed force, and national defense building."[57] Additionally, the Politburo is authorized to appoint several thousand officials throughout the Chinese political system and can review the lower level appointments of several thousand more.[58]

While the Politburo, in theory, is overall in charge of all functions of the political-military system and has the constitutional power to make all decisions, this body is still too large to be adequately responsive in handling more everyday or crisis-related decisions that require quick responses and flexibility. Therefore, in truth, the smaller membership of the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC) is in charge of the national

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[56] Alice L. Miller, "Hu Jintao and the Party Politburo," *China Leadership Monitor* 9 (2004): 6. http://www.hoover.org/publications/clm/issues/2904576.html (accessed November 09, 2009).

[57] Yao Yanjin et al., eds., *Junshi Zuzhi Tizhi Yanjiu* (Beijing: Guofang Daxue Chubanshe, 1997), 371 as cited in David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 112.

[58] Alice L. Miller, "Party Politburo Processes Under Hu Jintao," *Chinese Leadership Monitor* 11 (2004): 4. http://www.hoover.org/publications/clm/issues/2904176.html (accessed November 09, 2009).

security decision-making process in the PRC.[59] In most issues of importance, the Politburo procedures "essentially ratify initiatives that the Politburo Standing Committee generates."[60]

The nine members of the PBSC meet at least weekly to make substantial foreign and domestic policy decisions through consensus. As one former Politburo member once pointed out, however, this consensus[61] (in both the PB as well as PBSC meetings) takes into special account the positions of the members most affected by the decision as well as the connections and prominence of the members on any particular side of a debate.[62] As former Chinese diplomat Lu Ning remarked, if the membership becomes deadlocked over an issue, the meeting is recessed and a series of informal sessions and discussions among the membership and their respective advisory staff are pursued until a unified proposal can be submitted for approval in a formal session.[63]

When a security-related problem first emerges, the PBSC takes the lead and with the aid of the CCP General Office, attempts to get a precursory handle on the issue.[64] As is normally the case when a group of career professionals with diverse backgrounds are assembled, there are those in the room that have more specialized education, experience, or interest in a particular issue than others in the group. As the PBSC begins to assess the situation, these issue-specific professionals take a central part in the ongoing decision process. In the case of a crisis, a single member of the PBSC will be given the lead on coordinating the proposal and will assume the responsibility as *crisis manager* for the respective issue.[65] With this position of authority comes the ability to assemble a *crisis action team* of leaders that will meet at the crisis manager's office

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[59] John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, *Imagined Enemies: China Prepares for Uncertain War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 80.

[60] Miller, "Hu Jintao and the Party Politburo," 7.

[61] Lu Ning, *The Dynamics of Foreign-Policy Decisionmaking in China*, Second Edition (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), 19.

[62] Based on remarks by Hu Qiaomu on 20 April 1989 as cited by Miller, "Hu Jintao and the Party Politburo," 5–6.

[63] Lu, *The Dynamics of Foreign-Policy Decisionmaking in China*, 19.

[64] Lewis and Xue, *Imagined Enemies*, 89.

[65] Ibid., 90.

throughout the crisis to analyze the situation. Throughout the process, the crisis manager is required to update the PBSC of developments and to develop a crisis plan of action to propose to the PBSC for decision.[66]

The current membership of the 17th CCP Politburo Standing Committee in decreasing order of stature is CCP General Secretary, PRC President, and Chairman of the CMC Hu Jintao, National People's Congress Standing Committee Chairman Wu Bangguo, PRC Premier Wen Jiabao, Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress (CPPCC) Jia Qinglin, Li Changchun, Executive Secretary of the Secretariat (likely successor to President Hu Jintao) Xi Jinping, Executive Vice Premier (possible successor to Premier Wen Jiabao) Li Keqiang, Chairman of the Central Discipline Inspection Commission (CDIC) He Guoqiang, and Zhou Yongkang.

As listed above, there are no professional military members on the PBSC. Although this demonstrates the transition to increasingly civilian-oriented control of the military apparatus, it also points to the increased importance of the Central Military Commission (discussed in more depth below) when advising the central leadership on national security matters. Additionally, professional military members, although not formally seated in PBSC meetings, are present in the leadership small groups and handling President Hu's attention in other critical forums. Despite being represented solely by Hu Jintao in the PBSC, the PLA remains a very powerful part of the process.

c. Secretariat, CCP General Office, Central Policy Research Office

The "working body" of the Politburo and the PBSC is the Secretariat.[67] Headed by six powerful members of the upper leadership, this organization is responsible for managing the daily operations of the PBSC. These important and decisive functions include "implementing their policies, administering the distribution of central-level tasks, and serving as the switchboard for communicating instructions from and receiving reports destined for the Standing Committee and the larger Politburo membership."[68] In

[66] Lewis and Xue, *Imagined Enemies*, 90.

[67] Ibid., 81.

[68] Ibid.

essence, it is the top-level information conduit between the central leadership and the other institutions of the organization. Although this body's official purview in the overall scheme of the PRC is limited to running party affairs,[69] and it "has never played a decisionmaking role in foreign affairs,"[70] its operational impact expands throughout the top organs of power in party, military, and state. Not only does it channel and frame the information that goes before the Politburo and the PBSC, but it also shapes outcomes as it generates operational orders from the more general policy decisions of the higher-level decision-making meetings. Due to the executive secretary of the Secretariat being a member of the PBSC as well as the close institutional ties that join the Secretariat and the Standing Committee, the best way to understand their relationship is to see them as partners in the same mission.[71] The current membership of the Secretariat will serve until 2012 and includes Executive Secretary Xi Jinping, Director of the Propaganda Department Liu Yunshan, Director of the Organization Department Li Yuanzhao, Deputy Secretary of CDIC He Yong, Director of the Central Committee Policy Research Office Wang Huning, and the Director of the General Office Ling Jihua.

A second critical component of the party's staff system that plays an instrumental role in decision making is the CCP General Office. This institution manages the communications and staff documents for top-level meetings, administers travel, arranges living accommodations, and provides workspace and personal security for high-level officials. As long-time analyst of Chinese politics Alice Miller has observed, "the critical nature of the functions performed by the General Office on behalf of the Party leadership makes its staffing more politically sensitive than that of any of the other departments."[72] Due to the highly informed and inherently powerful position of Director of the General Office, it is necessary that the party general secretary appoint a trusted

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[69] Lu, *The Dynamics of Foreign-Policy Decisionmaking in China*, 12.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Lewis and Xue, *Imagined Enemies*, 81.

[72] Alice L. Miller, "The Central Committee Departments Under Hu Jintao," *China Leadership Monitor* 27 (2009): 2. http://www.hoover.org/publications/clm/issues/37362809.html (accessed November 10, 2009).

staffer to the position (as was witnessed at the 17th Party Congress in October 2007 when Hu Jintao chose Ling Jihua, his personal secretary, to manage the organization).

A third instrumental staff position within the party apparatus is the Policy Research Office which is responsible for coordinating research and issue-specific specialist briefings to support central leadership decision-making forums. Wang Huning, a well-known college debate champion and holdover from the Jiang Zemin leadership, currently serves as the director of the department and member of the Secretariat.

d. Leadership Small Groups

The overall business of the CCP is functionally divided into critical areas of responsibility, each headed by a member or members of the PB or the PBSC.[73] An institution of functionally focused "leading small groups" was used by Mao from the 1950s until the Cultural Revolution and was resurrected by Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s as a way to "reorganize and invigorate the nation's policymaking system."[74] These specialized leading groups (*lingdao xiaozu*) coordinate policy implementation in multiple organizations and institutions, cutting across the party, state, and military bureaucracies to increase inter-departmental action. Although there is a lack of intimate knowledge of these groups due to the scant coverage they receive in the Chinese press or official leadership statements, below are some basic insights.

There is a variety of kinds of leading small groups (LSG) which can usefully be sorted by who appointed and supervises the group, by whether the group is permanent or temporarily established, and by the seniority of the group's membership.[75] There are leading groups in the party, the military, and the state structures of the government at all levels of the system. The most important LSGs in CCP politics are a small number of permanent groups that were long ago established by the Central Committee. These groups report directly to the PB or PBSC, often include many officials

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[73] Lu, *The Dynamics of Foreign-Policy Decisionmaking in China*, 7.

[74] Lewis and Xue, *Imagined Enemies*, 88.

[75] Alice Miller, "The CCP Central Committee's Leading Small Groups," *China Leadership Monitor* 26 (2008): 3. http://www.hoover.org/publications/clm/issues/27770964.html (accessed November 10, 2009).

from these high-level organizations in their membership, and are heavily relied upon to handle special issues within the decision-making process including jurisdiction over national security problems (refer to Table 2 for a list of the current primary leading groups and their respective leadership).[76]

Table 2. Primary Leading Groups under Hu Jintao

Leading Group	*Leader, 2002–2007*	*Leader, 2008–Present*
Finance & Economy	Wen Jiabao	Wen Jiabao
Politics and Law	Lou Gan	Zhou Yongkang
National Security	Hu Jintao	Hu Jintao
Foreign Affairs	Hu Jintao	Hu Jintao
Hong Kong & Macao	Zeng Qinghong	Xi Jinping
Taiwan Affairs	Hu Jintao	Hu Jintao
Propaganda & Ideology	Li Changchun	Li Changchun
Party-Building	Zeng Qinghong?	Xi Jinping

(From: Miller, "Leading Small Groups," 6.)

When a crisis occurs, the PBSC takes the lead and is the first decision-making body that is briefed of the situation. As mentioned above, typically a member of the PBSC that is linked with the particular issue in question is assigned the central role of crisis manager. The crisis manager then selects the other specialists in the various bureaucracies of the party, state, and military hierarchies that are needed in a nuclear group that will review the issue and propose a solution to the PBSC and PB for a consensus decision. It is at this point that the mechanism of the LSG comes into play, as the crisis manager activates these specialized instruments to collect and analyze information on the issue at hand. In addition to increasing the chances of creative problem solving by having the most authoritative experts focused on the same issue together, this structure allows crisis managers and other senior leadership figures to spread the overall responsibility of the decision among a larger group of individuals.[77]

[76] Lewis and Xue, *Imagined Enemies*, 88.

[77] Ibid., 91.

Most of the time, complex issues confronting the central leadership do not simply fall into any one subject area. An international crisis, for example, will likely require the expertise of the foreign affairs leading group as well as the national security leading group and possibly others. In these cases, the importance of maintaining formal boundaries among leading groups is secondary to collectively accomplishing the mission at hand. LSGs carry the authority to cut across institutional boundaries to achieve overall cooperation. They are the action centers of the entire organization when confronting complex problems that require senior level attention and serve in this capacity from the beginning to the end of the conflict.[78] However, as can be imagined, forcing a variety of unique institutions to unite to find a common solution is an objective that can be problematic in execution despite centrally-delegated authorities.

The CCP LSGs also serve as a model for the creation of other small groups in the various bureaucracies and individual institutions at lower levels throughout the government. Often labeled as "contingency teams" (*yingji xiaozu*), these groups serve as the grass-roots origins of situational information, special intelligence, ideas, and proposals as various staffs strive to meet the task of informing their respective senior leaders at the higher levels in more prominent leading groups.[79] As a way to ensure that quality contingency teams are being assembled and acceptable inputs are being formulated at these various levels, the party has provided three guiding principles to follow: inputs must conform to the national interest as articulated by the central leadership, must promote justice according to the laws of the PRC, and must "be accepted by the ordinary people."[80] Although these guidelines are vague, they demonstrate a concerted effort by the central leadership to encourage and utilize the LSG as the basic decision-making mechanism in crisis management.

[78] Lewis and Xue, *Imagined Enemies*, 92.

[79] Ibid., 93.

[80] Ibid., 94.

2. Military Decision-Making Apparatus

In addition to the Party, a second bureaucratic hierarchy that figures prominently into the national security decision-making process is the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Despite some adjustments that have been made over the last few decades in force size and command, control, and communication (C3) procedures in order to match the evolving needs of modern warfare, "the organizational structure of the PLA today remains essentially that of the Soviet model imported during the 1950s."[81] This structure is headed by a Central Military Commission (CMC), chaired by the Party General Secretary Hu Jintao. Although China technically has two CMCs (one for the party and one for the state legislature as established by the PRC constitution), since the membership of the two are exactly the same, the party CMC remains the primary instrument of power over the operations of the military (the state legislature only controls the budget which even then is a euphemism since the membership of the NPC and the State Council are also senior leaders in the party and derive their authority from the Chinese people through the care of the CCP). Understanding the CMC and PLA structure and process of decision making is vital to predicting the interests and behavior of the Chinese military in crisis.

a. Central Military Commission

According to the Chinese National Defense Law, the PLA is primarily responsible for China's external defense and secondarily required to provide domestic security in accordance with the PRC constitution under the leadership of the CMC.[82] The CMC, under the guidance of the single highest ranking member of the CCP and the ten highest ranking officers in the Chinese military, commands the strategy, operations, and tactics the Chinese military and paramilitary forces (including the PLA, the People's Armed Police (PAP), and the public militia) and determines all PRC national defense policies. Although the PRC state council assists the CMC on issues involving use of the military for domestic security missions, and the Ministry of National Defense (MND) is included in the formal bureaucratic structure of the PLA, these bodies serve principally as

[81] David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military: Progress, Problems, and Prospects* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 109.

[82] Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today*, 19.

advisory bodies to the CMC in military affairs responsible for articulating national defense policies rather than unilaterally making national security decisions.

The current membership of the CMC is Chairman Hu Jintao, two Vice Chairmen Guo Boxiong and Xu Caihou, state councilor and Minister of National Defense Liang Guanglie, Head of the General Staff Department (GSD) Chen Bingde, Head of the General Political Department (GPD) Li Jinai, Head of the General Logistics Department (GLD) Liao Xilong, Commander of the Second Artillery strategic missile force (SAF) Jing Zhiyuan, Commander of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) Wu Shengli, and Commander of the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) Xu Qiliang.[83] The decisions of the CMC are implemented through the coordination and guidance of four specialized and critically important departments. Each of these departments has its equivalent components in the lower levels of the military structure including each service, military educational institution, each of the seven military region headquarters, and even in each brigade or regiment level. This structure is illustrated in Figure 3 and is described in detail below.

[83] Based on information provided by the Chinese Ministry of National Defense official Web site at http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Database/Leadership/index.htm (accessed February 06, 2010).

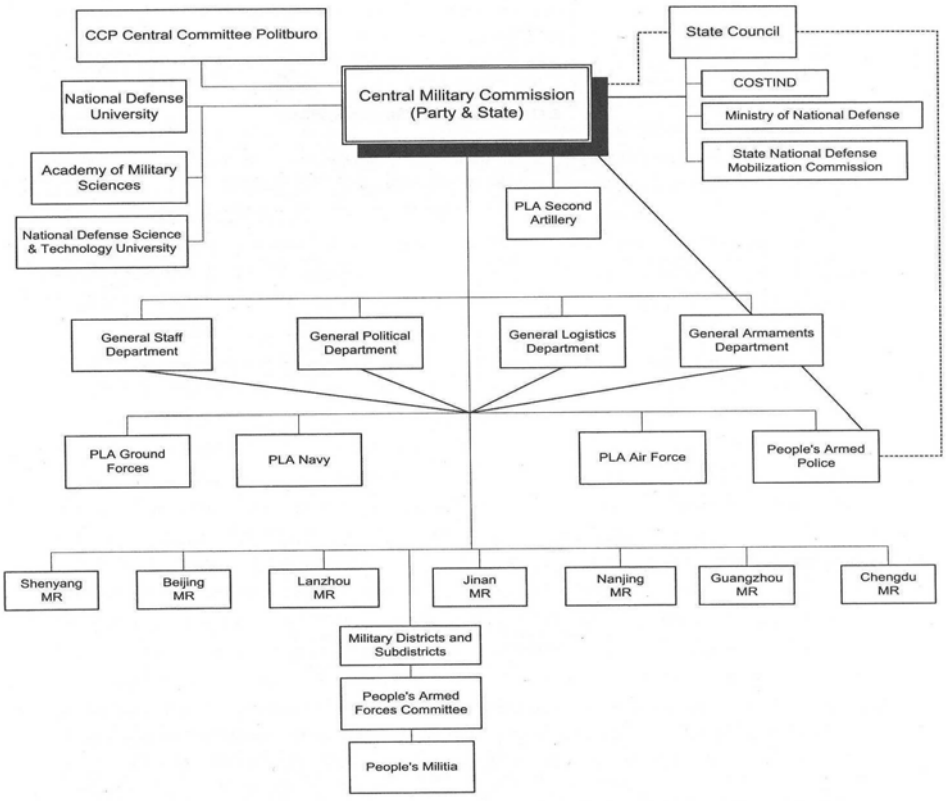

Figure 3. People's Liberation Army Command Structure
(From: David Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military*, 111.)

b. Departments

The General Staff Department (GSD) organizes and commands military operations and is responsible for "operations, intelligence, electronic warfare, communications, military affairs, training, mobilization, meteorological and survey, cartographic functions, and foreign affairs for the entire PLA."[84] It is the senior department of the four and serves as the service headquarters for the Chinese army. During peacetime, most of the GSD functions are administrative and routine as it serves as the overall quality control mechanism for military readiness. During crisis "it supervises all theater operations and control's the nation's combat forces at and above the corps (*jun*) level and air and naval units at the division (*shi*) level."[85]

[84] Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today*, 28–9.

[85] Lewis and Xue, *Imagined Enemies*, 117.

GSD has standing orders from the CMC that in the case of a crisis that could result in war, it is to convene a leading group of senior officers in all specialties, services, and regions at the Operations Department command center to formulate battle plans.[86] During this process, the GSD often supports this military leading group with other small groups consisting of military strategists and foreign military analysts from the nation's academic institutions and think-tanks. Two of these groups, the Strategic Committee and the International Situation Research Team, are formal institutions under the control of the GSD that are routinely used in military crisis planning. "In reaching its decision, the CMC relies more on the two units than any other research groups."[87] At the heart of GSD and serving overall situational awareness cell for the CMC is the Operations Bureau 24-hour watch.[88] Additionally, the GSD also oversees the operations of all the PLA's nuclear forces with only the CMC chairman having the authority to launch nuclear weapons (only after getting the agreement of the other members of the CMC and the Politburo).[89] Likely for purposes of strategic control and deterrence, the nuclear forces of the Second Artillery are exceptional in that they are under the direct operational control of the CMC.

The General Political Department (GPD) administers, organizes, and oversees the political work of the Chinese armed forces. Due to the PLA being first and foremost a party-army, the doctrine of the CCP has always been coupled closely with the discipline and policies of the PLA. The GPD functions as a monitoring device and second channel of information about the internal operations and compliance of military personnel that serves to strengthen the penetrative reach of the CCP, Politburo, and CMC. The GPD functions through the use of political commissars at the regiment level and above and party cells with unit leaders below the regiment level. National-level political guidance is passed from Beijing to the various party committees in each level all the way

[86] Lewis and Xue, *Imagined Enemies*, 117–18.

[87] Ibid., 119.

[88] Since so little is known about these groups including how they are organized, their specific missions, and their manning, it is very difficult to assess their standard operating procedures, specific institutional capabilities, and the nature of the decision-making processes that are used to support the central leadership.

[89] Lewis and Xue, *Imagined Enemies*, 120.

to the individual units. Unit leaders then insure that all personnel understand and comply with party political guidance throughout the organization. Although one source from 1990 claimed that commissars at all levels are equivalent in rank to the senior military commander at the same level,[90] GSD regulations published in an internal PLA document state that the headquarters with its operational commander "is the only organ in the PLA that has command authority."[91] As one China analyst has pointed out, this seems to indicate that at least during times of war, the operational military commander is senior to the commissar at his respective level of responsibility.[92]

The remaining two departments, while being critically important to the overall mission and operations of the PLA, are less of a factor in the national security decision-making process during a crisis. The General Logistics Department (GLD), as the name implies, is a support department responsible for the finances and accounting, transportation, supply, construction, and personnel services. The General Armaments Department (GAD) is a recent addition to the four (founded in 1998) that is responsible for providing weapons and technology to the PLA. It overseas research, development, and acquisition programs across China's industrial sector as well as from companies abroad. As stated previously, these four departments are directed by the CMC and together serve as the backbone of the Chinese military.

c. Military Services and Educational Institutes

Following the four departments in precedence, there are five services in the PLA that constitute the operational capabilities of the military. These are the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), the

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[90] Sun Weiben, ed., *Zhongguo Gongchangdang Dangwu Gongzuo Da Zidian* (Beijing: Zhongguo Zhanwang Chubanshe, 1989), 328 as cited in Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military*, 134.

[91] Expert Group for Revising Regulations of Headquarters, Campaign and Tactics Research Department, Academy of Military Sciences, "Distinct Characteristics, Strategic Advantage: On the Main Characteristics of the 'Chinese PLA Headquarters Regulations,'" *Jiefnagjun Bao*, February 4, 1997 as cited in Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military*, 128.

[92] Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military*, 128.

People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF), the Second Artillery Force (SAF),[93] and the People's Armed Police (PAP). Since Hu Jintao's appointment as chairman of the CMC in September 2004, this decision-making body was expanded to include the senior officer in each of these services so that each of these institutions now has direct military representation at the highest level—a move generally regarded as an effort to increase overall jointness and unity of effort across all services. It also demonstrates an effort to adapt to the needs of modern warfare by elevating the importance of capabilities in the air and on the sea in addition to on the ground—a movement away from the strictly army-centric mentality of the past. The basic mission of each service is familiar to anyone with a basic knowledge of military science, tactics, and hardware and is not included in this study, which is focused on an analysis of the national security decision-making process. Each service has its unique institutional capabilities and institutional identities as commonly seen in professional militaries elsewhere in the world. Each service uses its resources according to acceptable rules of engagement in order to accomplish its individual objectives and consequently the overall mission.[94]

There are three military educational institutes that provide specialized training and academic research to support the mission of the PLA. These are the Academy of Military Sciences (AMS), the National Defense University (NDU), and the National Defense Science and Technology University (NUDT). These formal institutes are not to be compared with the Strategic Committee and the International Situation Research Team discussed above. These are not permanent academic small groups under the direction of the GSD but rather are sizable, professional military academic organizations under the direct control of the CMC. Of these three institutions, the AMS, located in northwest Beijing, is the premier research and development center for the PLA

[93] Although Figure 3 above does not depict the SAF in the same way as the other military services, due to its separate and distinct relationship with the CMC and its four principle departments on par with the CMC-service relationships of the PLAN and PLAAF (with representation on the same level as the other services), it is categorized as a separate service in this study.

[94] As noted in the literature review that begins this chapter, many resources examine the characteristics and organizational culture of Chinese military services. Two authoritative texts in particular that describe these individual services in more detail are Shambaugh, *Modernizing China's Military* and Blasko, *Chinese Army Today*. In addition, a helpful text that has examined the cultures of the United States military services and has shown general tendencies that can be observed in other professional militaries as well is Carl H. Builder, *Masks of War* (Baltimore: Rand Corporation/John Hopkins Press, 1991).

and the foremost body for "the study of military strategy, operations, and tactics; military systems; military history; and foreign militaries."[95] Scholars from all of these institutions serve to inform the central leadership of the Politburo, the PBSC, as well as the CMC and its subordinate bodies. Professionals from these academies can be regularly appointed to aid crisis management teams with expert knowledge and strategic reflection.

d. Regional Headquarters

China is divided into seven military regions (refer to Figure 4). Each military region (MR) is named for the city where its headquarters is located.

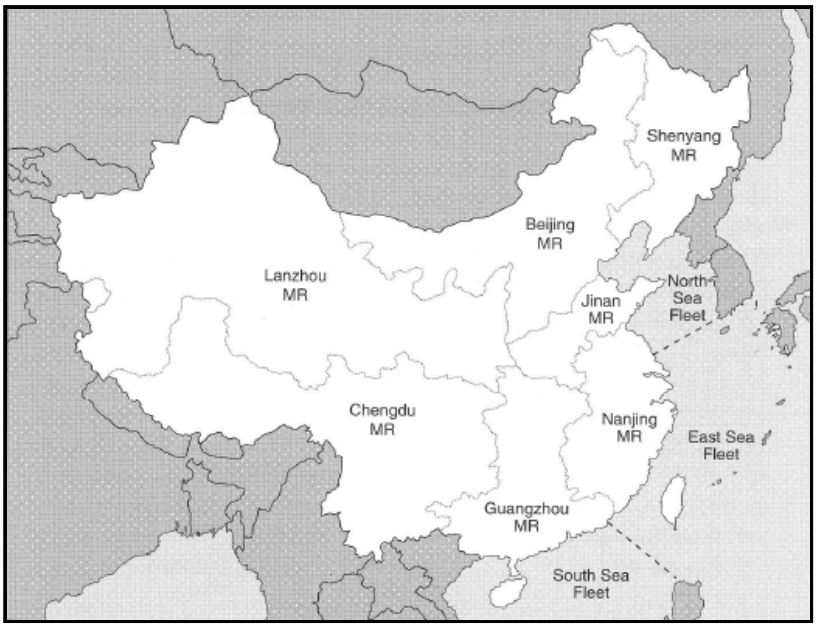

Figure 4. Chinese Military Regions and Fleets
(From: Shambaugh, Modernizing China's Military, 147.)

Each region is organized as a "theater of war" (*zhanqu*) and is designed to be the focus of operational warfare to confront potential crises that could arise in each respective zone. During a crisis, the CMC has direct control over each region through the

[95] Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today*, 31.

GSD and its Operations Department. In the case of a military crisis that is estimated to have the potential to escalate into war, the CMC through the GSD can be expected to establish operational control (and tactical control in the case of the strategic missile forces) by forming a theater joint command at the regional headquarters, advance command posts, and a group of senior military commanders to relay situational information and CMC directives between Beijing and the conflict zone.[96]

Each regional headquarters shares an organizational structure similar to that of the national military level, with the regional elements of each of the four functional departments and each military service at the regional level under the command of the MR party committee (consisting of the MR commander, the MR political commissar, MR chief of staff, and several deputy commanders) as depicted in Figure 5.

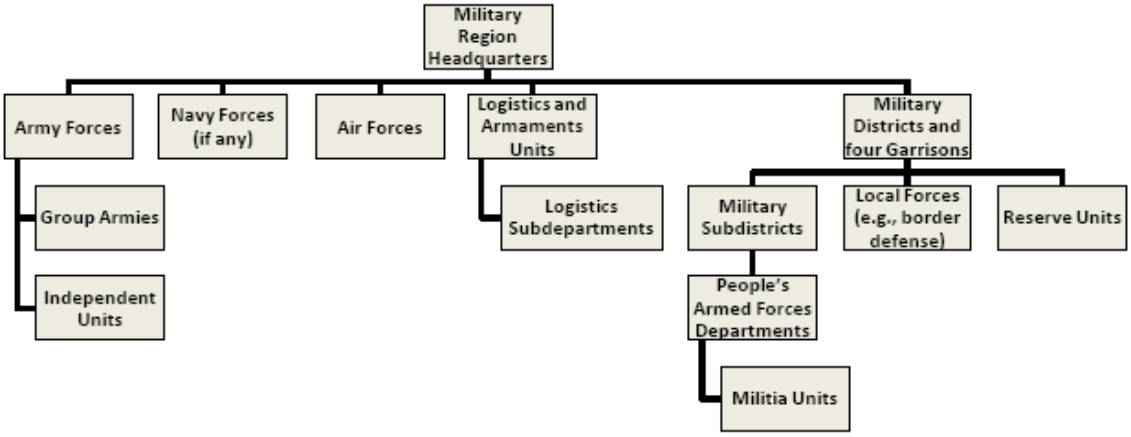

Figure 5. Military Region Structure
(After: Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today*, 34.)

e. Tactical Headquarters

Continuing the same theme of organization, subordinate to each MR command are tactical headquarters, which serve as the basic military units in the structure. Three to four specialized squads (ten to twelve soldiers) led by noncommissioned officers make up platoons which are commanded by a junior officer

[96] Lewis and Xue, *Imagined Enemies*, 124.

(typically forty personnel total).[97] Three or four platoons make up a company commanded by an army captain and a political instructor. Three to five companies make up a battalion commanded by a lieutenant colonel, political instructor, deputy commander, and a medical officer.[98]

Regiments (composed of three battalions or from 1,000 to 2,500 personnel) and brigades (composed of three to five battalions or from 2,000 to 6,000 personnel) are the first headquarters that are organized around a combined arms team with the support of the four functional departments.[99] Regiments and brigades are viewed as having the same function and are organized the same way (see Figure 6). These tactical headquarters are commanded by a colonel and a political commissar with the aid of a deputy commander, deputy commissar, and a chief of staff.[100]

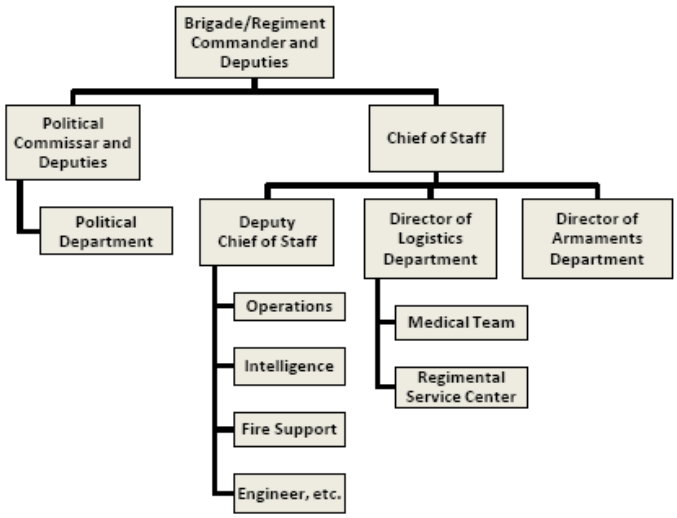

Figure 6. Tactical Headquarters Structure
(After: Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today*, 40.)

Administratively, divisions are typically composed of three regiments (totaling 10,000 personnel). A difference from the PRC military structure and other

[97] Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today*, 36–7.

[98] Ibid., 38.

[99] Ibid., 39.

[100] Ibid.

professional militaries is that operationally, brigades are seen as equivalent to divisions and are not commanded by divisional headquarters.[101] A division is commanded by a senior colonel and commissar with the aid of a deputy commander, deputy commissar, chief of staff, and staff organization similar in structure but larger in size than a regiment. Operationally, organized group armies consist of various arrangements of divisions, regiments, and brigades assembled to confront a certain mission (typically numbering from 30,000 to 50,000 personnel).[102] A MR headquarters controls multiple group armies and other various tactical units commiserate with the demands of its specific mission.

3. State Foreign Affairs Apparatus

While the decision-making power resides ultimately with the party, and the PLA wields coercive military power, the state institutions of law and foreign affairs also play a critical role in crisis decision making.

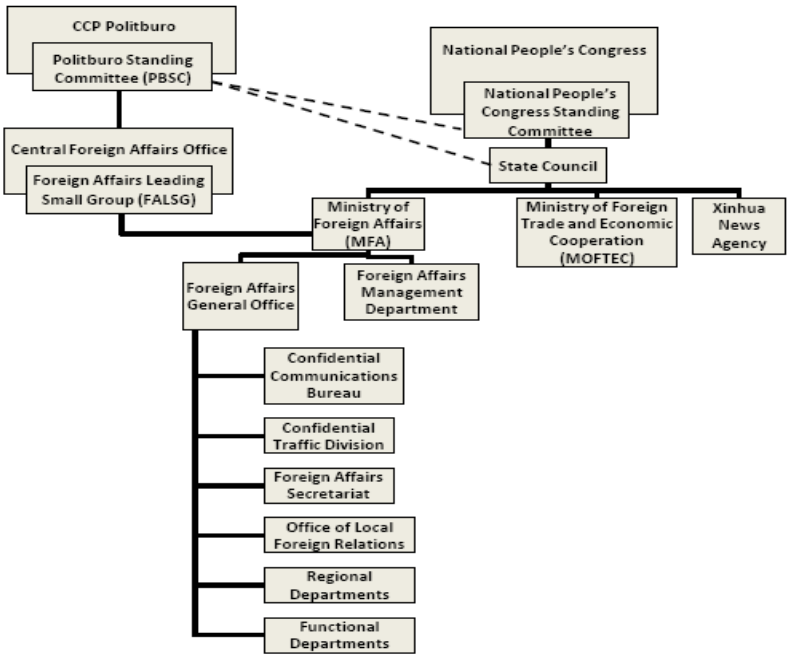

Figure 7. State Government Foreign Affairs Structure[103]

[101] Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today*, 41.

[102] Ibid., 43.

[103] Much of the information depicted in Figure 7 is from Lu Ning's account of the PRC state structure.

a. National People's Congress

The National People's Congress (NPC) is the legislative equivalent of the National Party Congress (though less powerful) and is presided over by PRC President Hu Jintao and Vice President Xi Jinping. Consisting of over three thousand delegates, the membership of the NPC is elected each four years and meets once every year to review major policy initiatives and revise Chinese state constitutional law. Although the NPC is far from being free of the influence of the party (the majority of members are also ranking CCP members), the body's overall influence within the Chinese government and plethora of institutional capabilities has steadily increased since the reforms of Deng Xiaoping (initiated in the late 1970s and early 1980s), at times even managing to stall major party initiatives.[104] The NPC has taken measures to adopt law and sponsor a system of courts—a process that still has much room for improvement.[105] It has also served a leading role in the institutional reforms that have characterized much of the past three decades, presiding over a plethora of individual organizations from the highest to the lowest levels of the Chinese state and including bureaucracies focused on everything from finances, economics, and trade to the environment, agriculture, education, science, culture, health, law, and—of most importance to this study—foreign affairs and research.

To better supervise this body's operations between sessions, the NPC selects a small group of senior leaders to represent its interests in the National People's Congress Standing Committee. This smaller body is able to meet more frequently throughout the year and remains tightly connected with the other high-level organs of power including the CCP Politburo and PBSC. The chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee is Wu Bangguo who presides over a group of fifteen vice chairmen and a secretary general. Of note, Wu is the number two leader in the PBSC, the most powerful decision-making body in China.

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[104] Murray Scot Tanner, "The Erosion of Central Party Control of Lawmaking," *China Quarterly* 138 (March 1994): 381–403.

[105] Lieberthal, *Governing China*, 177.

b. State Council

One of the responsibilities of the NPC is to elect a State Council that is responsible for the day-to-day affairs of the state government institutions. The State Council is currently presided over by PRC Premier Wen Jiabao, four vice premiers—including Executive Vice Premier Li Keqiang (likely Wen's chosen successor), Vice Premier of Agriculture Hui Liangyu, Vice Premier for Industry and Energy Zhang Dejiang, and Vice Premier of Finance Wang Qishan—and five state councilors including Minister of National Defense Liang Guanglie, Minister of Foreign Affairs Dai Bingguo, Minister of Public Security Meng Jianzhu, Minister of Education, Science and Technology, and the Private Sector Liu Yandong, and State Council Secretary General Ma Kai. Through this collection of senior executives, the State Council supervises an expansive organization that reaches all the way to the local township and covers a wide variety of issue areas.

PRC Premier Wen Jiabao is most focused on maintaining the economic growth needed in China while many of the foreign policy issues related to national security are kept within the domain of Party General Secretary Hu Jintao. As for foreign affairs decision making, the principal group with the power to determine Chinese action is the Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group (FALSG). As discussed above in the leading small group section, Hu Jintao presides over this permanent leading group and acquires through other senior leaders the resources needed from all the relevant bureaucratic institutions of state, party, and military—thereby, exercising trans-departmental authorities to coordinate efforts on specific issues. However, the state government has a prominent role in this process as well since the FALSG relies upon the Central Foreign Affairs Office for its staffing, information, and special expertise—all resources principally provided by the General Office of the State Council under the direction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[106]

[106] Lu, *The Dynamics of Foreign-Policy Decisionmaking in China*, 25.

c. Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is the principal government channel for collecting, processing, and disseminating information on issues related to foreign governments and—despite multiple changes in structure and authorities—remains home to the most important institutional capabilities in foreign affairs available to central governmental decision makers. The MFA, although administratively subordinate to the State Council, operationally reports directly to the PBSC through the FALSG (both currently managed by PRC President Hu Jintao).[107] The MFA is a large bureaucracy with over 3,201 members.[108] Its total structure (including elements not illustrated in Figure 7) includes the Foreign Affairs General Office, the Foreign Affairs Management Department, eight departments focused on the MFA's internal affairs, and sixteen departments focused on China's external affairs (including both regional and functional departments).[109] The MFA is currently headed by Minister Yang Jiechi who has a doctorate degree in history and an extensive career record of handling Sino-American foreign affairs. His experience includes having served in the PRC embassy in the United States as a staffer and minister, as the head of the MFA Department of North American and Oceania Affairs, and most recently as Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China to the United States of America from 2001 to 2005. His career progression to the foremost position in the MFA demonstrates, in part, the high priority placed on managing Chinese affairs with the United States.[110] Although the size and span of the institutional capabilities administered by the MFA is often under-appreciated in studies of Chinese national security decision making, this body plays a significant role in informing, framing, and implementing the overall outcome of crisis decisions.

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[107] Lu, *The Dynamics of Foreign-Policy Decisionmaking in China*, 25.

[108] Ibid. According to Lu Ning, this number is in excess of the approved official cap of 2,660 personnel and reflects the status as of 1990.

[109] Information available at official Web site for the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs. http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zzjg/ (accessed February 10, 2010).

[110] Official Web site for Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China. http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/wjbz/ (accessed February 10, 2010).

The MFA is the primary information channel for the overall decision-making structure and a foremost implementer of bilateral and multilateral diplomatic contact. As the senior department of the MFA, the Foreign Affairs General Office supervises the work of the Confidential Communications Bureau (responsible for all diplomatic communications) and the Confidential Traffic Division (responsible for the exchange of classified information in hard copy).[111] It also oversees the operations of the Foreign Affairs Secretariat (responsible for maintaining a 24 hour Situation Room watch as well as providing critical staff to high-ranking ministers and other central offices such as the Central Foreign Affairs Office which staffs the FALSG).[112] The MFA includes departments devoted to handling issues arising in specific regions (including the approximately thirty personnel assigned to handle United States-specific problems) or within specific functional domains (including processing information from Chinese missions abroad). The basic listing provided here is only a small portion of the total resources available to the foreign affairs bureaucracy. In addition, since many issues in foreign relations in some way involve economics and commerce, the MFA often coordinates with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (MOFTEC). It also makes use of the state-controlled Xinhua media agency to receive both unfiltered information of current events and researched foreign analysis products as well as to send official messages on state policies to the viewing public.

C. SUMMARY

The PRC structure detailed in this chapter demonstrates the applicability of the cybernetic approach as delineated in Chapter II in the following ways:

- The Chinese government is intensely hierarchical and is arranged in key vertical conduits of action along the lines of its principal institutions (CCP, PLA, State Council) each with unique tasks, capabilities, and routines.
- Each vertical conduit is equipped with ample chokepoints where staff offices and secretarial personnel can screen and shape the issues that get top attention.

[111] Lu, *The Dynamics of Foreign-Policy Decisionmaking in China*, 26.

[112] Ibid.

- There is a tendency from the highest levels to the lowest levels of the government structure for decision makers to select an appropriate course of action in collective groups rather than as stand-alone figures accepting all responsibility for the outcome.
- Despite using the LSG as a cross-institution coordination mechanism, these institutional hierarchies ("stovepipes") can be expected at times to restrict communication and prevent optimal cooperation during crisis management.
- The structure changes very gradually and incrementally, at times going years without dramatic alteration then undergoing significant shifts in structure (an example of this was the recent creation of the GAD in response to lack of coordination among industry groups and the need to improve the PLA).

Now that this study has established the foundations of the cybernetic model as well as the PRC structure and process, it turns to testing PRC politics to determine the applicability of the cybernetic approach in explaining Beijing's behavior.

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IV. TEST #1: CURRENT TRENDS IN PRC POLITICS

A. INTRODUCTION

This study now turns its attention to the first of two tests that will illustrate the applicability of the cybernetic approach in explaining and predicting Beijing's behavior. Since Deng Xiaoping's consolidation of power in the CCP in 1978, the country has implemented a series of wide-ranging reforms in its economic, social, military, and political structures. Some of these trends have advanced to great degrees in the last decade under the governance of Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao and reveal critical insights into Beijing's decision-making process and the changing climate of Chinese politics. This chapter analyzes current trends that continue to shape Chinese politics through a lens of the three key functional variables described in Chapter II. This test proves that despite much emphasis in China-centered scholarship on viewing the PRC's strategic goals as key indicators of Beijing's rational decision making, ongoing changes in Chinese politics illustrate that a cybernetic-style process is at work.

B. CHINA MANAGING COMPLEXITY

Certain political trends including a focus on institutionalizing the system, the development of a repertoire of professional institutions and individuals with specialized expertise and routines, and a crucial attention on only a limited number of issues that can potentially threaten the survival of the organization have collectively allowed Beijing to manage the increasing complexity of its decision-making environment.

1. Institutionalization

The political reforms largely initiated under the guidance of Deng Xiaoping beginning at the 1978 Third Plenum began a deliberate, incremental effort within the senior leadership of the CCP to institutionalize Chinese politics—to establish a predictable system governed by accepted, legal norms of behavior and routines of operation. This drive to institutionalize the Chinese political system has been attributed to two primary motivations. First, Deng's ascension to the highest-ranking position of

power in the CCP was completed in tandem with a shift in national priorities away from the Mao-era focus on social revolution and national security to a new program centered in national growth through economic development and modernization—new priorities accompanied by a wide range of new challenges and the need for a stable political environment. Secondly, following the erratic, disruptive policies initiated by the central leadership of Mao Zedong that had at times halted economic development and held the entire political system hostage to the whims of a single leader and his core elite, Deng and the new senior leadership cadre were determined to bring institutional change to the CCP and other organs of power within the Chinese government that would result in increased productivity, transparency, dependability, and accountability of the leadership decision-making processes.[113] As explained by Deng following similar if only short-lived institutional changes that were adopted in the late 1950s, the demands of the increasingly complex environment in China proved to be more than the archaic leadership structures could handle, forcing the CCP to recognize the need for improved organizational responsibilities, authorities, and institutionalized procedures.[114] Although institutionalization can be broadly defined to include a plethora of organizational identities and cultural tendencies, here the term is applied more specifically to two prevalent trends within the Chinese system: the shift to increased collective leadership processes and the fragmentation of decision-making responsibilities both horizontally and vertically among an increased number of political actors.

a. Collective Leadership

The current trend in Chinese leadership decision making has been away from the role of a paramount leader and the monopoly of power among a few elite cadre at the center toward an increasingly collective process where decisions arise out of the consensus of larger groups of party members. Although China is still led by a self-elected group of elite party leaders, the highest ranking leader has less power over his

[113] Alice L. Miller, "Institutionalization and the Changing Dynamics of Chinese Leadership Politics," in *China's Changing Political Landscape: Prospects for Democracy*, ed. Cheng Li (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2008), 62.

[114] Ibid., 65.

colleagues than in previous administrations. Decisions now result from collective discussions where the party general secretary is only the senior member of the group whose opinion, although very important, cannot override the opinions of the others.[115]

Since Deng's emphasis on reinvigorating collective leadership processes in order to better handle complex issues facing China in the late 1970's, there has been a progressive movement to greater political collectivization rather than a reversion to the old centralized leadership decisions of Mao. Deng strongly argued against the dictatorial style of leadership of Mao and his "cult of personality" in a 1980 speech "On Reform of the System of Party and State Leadership" and instead stressed that the top levels of leadership must be based in greater equality in the decision-making process.[116] In 1989 during the transition to Jiang Zemin, Deng remarked that "if your leading body is going to succeed, it is essential for you to form a collective leadership … a collective in which each member cooperates closely with the others, and a collective that thinks independently … you should complement each other's thinking and help correct each other's mistakes and shortcomings."[117]

Deng's successor, Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin, continued this trend, emphasizing in his Central Committee report to both the 15th Party Congress (1997) and the 16th Party Congress (2002) the importance of maintaining principles of collective decision making at the top levels of the party and state as well as extending these practices to party committees at lower levels.[118] Jiang's successor and current leader of China, Hu Jintao, has further advanced the concept of collective leadership both in word and deed by emphasizing over the past decade the importance of intra-party democracy and "scientific" decision-making processes that focus on the strengths of

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[115] Based on remarks by Hu Qiaomu as cited in Miller, "Hu Jintao and the Party Politburo," 5–6.

[116] Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, 1975-1982* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1984), 323 as cited in Miller, "Hu Jintao and the Party Politburo," 6.

[117] Deng Xiaoping, "With Stable Policies of Reform and Opening to the Outside World, China can have Great Hopes for the Future," (September 4, 1989) in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1982-1992)* as cited in Lewis and Xue, 107.

[118] Miller, "Hu Jintao and the Party Politburo," 6.

collective decision making in handling complex issues currently facing the PRC.[119] Hu has also been the first leader to not be formally labeled as the individual genesis of specific ideas or to be titled China's "core" or "central" leader—preferring instead to be seen as the senior member of a collective leadership group. Systemically, there is now a greater tolerance than ever before for constructive debate among leaders in party, military, and state organs of power and decision making.

Collective leadership practices, seen through a cybernetic approach, demonstrate a tendency to solve complex problems by relying on the strengths of multiple actors within the organization rather than through the unitary goals and rational action of a single leader. Collective leadership is the accepted norm of behavior within the decision-making forum that allows more actors to bring additional insight to the process and spreads the responsibility for decision outcomes among a larger group of individuals and institutions.

b. Fragmentation

Another aspect of this expanding political space includes the fragmentation of decision-making responsibilities into the hands of other individuals and institutions not previously included in the central leadership group. This can occur horizontally as other high-ranking leadership bodies are endowed with increased authority and responsibility for selecting or advising appropriate outcomes. Authority can also be fragmented vertically as the central leadership delegates decision-making responsibilities up or down the chain of command in order to better select and implement a suitable course of action. Both of these tendencies highlight the organizational nature of Chinese politics and are noticeably present in Beijing's national security and foreign policy decision-making processes.

(1) Pluralization. As described above, pluralization is the dispersal of responsibilities within the other institutions that share the top levels of the

[119] "Intra-party" democracy in this context refers more to increased collective decision-making within the current institutional structure of the Chinese government rather than embracing Western-style popular electoral democratic principles. For more discussion on this topic, refer to David Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 121.

government apparatus. Most notably, in China this includes the top tiers of the military and state hierarchies. Over the past decade, the CCP under Hu Jintao has made a concerted effort to expand the scope of the institutions that are represented in the central leadership meetings. Although, as one veteran scholar has remarked, the inclusion of additional political actors in the process has been "licensed" by the central government in the effort of promoting reform without sacrificing control of the political domain, this tendency has nevertheless affected the nature of the decision-making process.[120]

One notable indication of pluralization is the heavy use of the informal LSG mechanism for handling a variety of significant issues. Currently, most actual decision making is completed by these issue-centric collections of key individuals from relevant institutions throughout the party, state, and military hierarchies. The group leader (typically a member of the PBSC if not the party general secretary himself) has the authority to pull whatever resources that are deemed helpful or necessary to making an informed decision or proposal that will ultimately be subjected to the consensus of the larger Politburo or the PBSC for approval.

Another indication of pluralization is the increased power of the military and state bureacracies. Under the leadership of Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao (and arguably due in part to the closeness of their relationship), the party's strict direction over the affairs of the other two hierarchies—the PLA and the state government—has been loosened thereby empowering both organizations to better handle issues arising in their respective domains and increasing the overall pluralization of the central government. One veteran analyst has described these relationships as bargains where the CCP "provides political protection and resources in exchange for corporatist professionalism and allegiance."[121]

Yet another indication of increasing political pluralization is the increasing influence of public opinion in the central leadership decision-making process.

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[120] David M. Lampton, "China's Foreign and National Security Policy-Making Process: Is It Changing, and Does It Matter?" in *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform, 1978–2000,* ed. David M. Lampton (Stanford: University of California Press, 2001), 12.

[121] Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party*, 165.

During his tenure in office, Hu Jintao has focused the government's attention on people-centered policies that serve the greater mass of the Chinese population. Upon assuming the position of PRC president in March 2003, Hu publicly announced that his administration would "synthesize [the principles of] party leadership, the people being masters of their own country, and ruling the country according to law," thereby indicating the accepted and embraced role of popular opinion in shaping the alternatives considered by leadership to be appropriate courses of action to pursue.[122] Premier Wen echoed this stance at the 2003 NPC by stating that "the government will self-consciously accept the supervision of the People's Congress, the masses, and the media."[123]

(2) Decentralization. Beijing also uses decentralization—the vertical proliferation of responsibilities—to fragment complex issues for specialized treatment within the governing apparatus. In China, decentralization can occur both within the national-level organizations in Beijing as well as from the capital to the provincial level institutions.

The role of the PBSC as the central organ of national security and foreign policy decision making has evolved as power has been delegated from the CCP Central Committee to the Politburo. As seen in the latest two Party Congresses, the Hu leadership has sought to develop increased accountability and transparency into this particular relationship over the past decade by reestablishing a routine originally initiated at the 13th Party Congress in 1987 of regularly delivering reports of the Politburo's work to the Central Committee, thereby setting a model of official accountability for the rest of the government to emulate.[124]

The Hu administration has also further decentralized the system by authorizing lower-level bodies within the national-level governmental hierarchies to assume important decision-making responsibilities, resulting in many duties being absorbed by respective ministers of foreign and economic policy and senior military

[122] Willy Wo-Lap Lam, *Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao Era: New Leaders, New Challenges* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2006), 124.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Miller, "Party Politburo Processes," 5.

leaders with significantly less oversight.[125] Decentralization has also been observed in the increased "policy space" available to the provincial leaders when interpreting national-level decisions in the way that best fits their specific provincial needs. Some research has cited multiple instances where provinces have functioned within the often broad national-level mandates to conduct international business and even informal diplomacy on their own "in order to enhance their own international images and pursue their own economic interests."[126] While provincial moves that exceed the acceptable limits of action deemed appropriate for provincial-international affairs can be problematic for Beijing's overall foreign policy, having an empowered yet cooperative provincial system provides an additional layer to the decision-making process that can assist the government in managing complexity in a cybernetic manner.

2. Professionalization

A second critical trend that continues to shape Chinese politics and assists Beijing in the management of an increasingly more complex environment is the high priority given to professionalism and specialization in all domains of the government structure. As issue-specific expertise increases, the overall capability of the government to respond to a wide range of problems is enhanced.

a. Specialization

The cybernetic approach to decision making states that outcomes are based in the existing institutional capabilities present in the organization. Beijing, realizing the expanding scope of issues present in its current international and domestic environments, has restructured the collective decision-making process in a way that encourages and utilizes a variety of specialized, professional institutions. As Eliot Freidson's foundational analysis of state professional organizations outlines, only the national government has the ability through coercion (typically in the form of law and

[125] Lampton, "China's Foreign and National Security Policy-Making Process," 20.

[126] Peter T. Y. Cheung and James T. H. Tang, "The External Relations of China's Provinces," in *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform, 1978*-2000, ed. David M. Lampton (Stanford: University of California Press, 2001), 105.

bureaucratic regulation) to define an individual institution's specialized mission and consequently its identity, culture, and capabilities.[127] As explained by Freidson, depending on how the state defines these attributes will determine the degree of specialization the institution will entertain, the uniqueness of the institution within its respective area of specialty, the resources allotted to the institution to pursue its specialty, the institution's degree of control over entrance into its respective domain, and the level of audience the institution serves with its specialized information.

The increased emphasis on professionalization in the Chinese government has been seen in trends including the selection and promotion of bureaucratic elites and subelites with special education, experience, and institutional support within the central decision-making process, the creation of decision-making bodies and institutions that meet specific needs, and the reliance of the central leadership on specialized information.[128] While all of the senior cadre in the Deng administration and nearly half of the leadership in the Jiang administration had legitimacy based in revolutionary credentials or lengthy party experience, the Hu administration includes a very well educated group of specialists with a variety of university degrees including engineering geology, economics, business management, military science, political science, philosophy, history, and law. Only two of twenty-five top officials lack a university degree and instead have obtained credentials from the Central Party School. Six of these individuals have doctorate degrees in their respective areas of expertise.[129] During Politburo and PBSC meetings, issues are initially briefed and explained in detail by members of the group that have special expertise and training in the respective issue area.[130] In addition, the LSG institution is frequently used to handle crises in specific

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[127] Eliot Freidson, *Professionalism: The Third Logic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 127 as cited in Alice L. Miller, "The Political Implications of PLA Professionalism," in *Civil-Military Relations in Today's China: Swimming in a New Sea,* eds. David M. Finkelstein and Kristen Gunness, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2007), 141–42.

[128] Lampton, "China's Foreign and National Security Policy-Making Process," 5.

[129] Author's notes from Alice Miller's course on Chinese Politics at Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2009. Also see Cheng Li, "Will China's 'Lost Generation' Find a Path to Democracy?" in *China's Changing Political Landscape: Prospects for Democracy*, ed. Cheng Li (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2008), 98–117.

[130] Based on remarks by Hu Qiaomu as cited in Miller, "Hu Jintao and the Party Politburo," 5–6.

issue areas and frequently calls upon specialists in particular areas of interest from a variety of bureaucratic offices throughout the organization to provide issue-specific insight prior to arriving at a consensus on an appropriate response.[131] Furthermore, as described above, bureaucracies such as the CMC and MFA have been expanded and reorganized in order to provide specialty personnel representing unique institutional capabilities and areas of interest at key decision-making meetings.

b. Organizational Routines

Pre-planned routines are at the heart of the cybernetic model of decision making. Although these standard operating procedures (SOPs) may vary in their specific functions from mundane tasks such as inter-office routing procedures of correspondence to complex sequences of action used to respond to emergencies, they each represent an institutional capability existing in the organization. SOPs are predictable and can be practiced in preparation for use should the appropriate situation arise. As such, these sequences of action provide a repertoire of alternatives available to decision makers.

To Deng Xiaoping, successful reform and modernization of China required standardized, predictable processes of decision making with the party and state bodies meeting on regular schedules according to their respective constitutions. Deng instituted routine turnovers of the senior leadership and imposed mandatory retirements for aging central party members that continue to be upheld in the CCP structure. This practice has continued and expanded in scope under Jiang and Hu. In addition, central leadership meetings have become more regularized, since Deng with the overall climate of the government transitioning in favor of a more predictable system of routines rather than the unstable, erratic nature of central politics often exhibited under Mao. Similarly, the PLA, as all professional militaries, relies heavily on SOPs to coordinate and execute complicated routines within each functional department and service branch extending all the way to the individual specialized unit on the battlefield or in the headquarters office.

However, routines also limit the range of alternatives available from which decision makers can choose. Since each unique institution establishes sequences

[131] Lewis and Xue, *Imagined Enemies,* 90.

of action appropriate to meeting their own respective mission requirements, decision makers are choosing from a menu of pre-made options rather than custom-ordering new organization routines that can be enacted to deal with the current situation. Although this allows the decision maker to simplify a complex problem, it also decreases the overall flexibility of the organization. In order to counter this constraint, decision makers try to expand the existing repertoire of routines, as seen in the constant restructuring of both the foreign affairs and national security bureaucracies over the past three decades.

3. Focus on Survival

The cybernetic model dictates that the organization is primarily focused on one thing—survival—which is often quantified as a level of autonomy or amount of allocated resources. This trait is present in all levels of the organization from the central leadership to the local government. As the national-level government creates unique institutions with distinctly defined purposes and expectations, each of these institutions develops capabilities and identities that strive to accomplish its particular mission in order to insure its continued existence. Similarly, each individual involved in any of these institutions performs his or her responsibilities in an appropriate manner according to accepted rules of behavior in order to insure the survival of their career.

Since every piece of the organization is focused on survival, the limited amount of attention and resources available to decision makers is devoted exclusively to monitoring the few potential problem areas that threaten the organization's continued existence. By only focusing on a few select variables that are the most critical, the leadership prioritizes demands and thereby can simplify an otherwise complex situation. Additionally, since all these different institutions at all levels of the government may have slightly different interpretations of policy that best fit their respective needs, by focusing most of its attention on controlling action in the domains most critical to the overall survival of the CCP, the central leadership is best able to remain in power.

The CCP has always focused most of its attention on staying in power. Although Deng Xiaoping instituted a wide range of economic, social, and political reforms and emphasized the need to open China to the trade and ideas of the outside world, he was

also resolute in his ideological perspective that the absolute ruling power of the CCP should never be compromised. As he stated in the March 1979 address on the "four cardinal principles," the Chinese government must uphold the socialist road and the leadership of the CCP. In the same manner, although the current Hu administration has made large strides in elevating the interests of the majority of Chinese population, it has remained ever mindful of the governing ability of the CCP. As Hu Jintao articulated at the 2004 Central Committee *Resolution on Strengthening the Construction of the Party's Governance Ability*, the leadership's first priority is in maintaining the absolute rule of the CCP.[132] Although other priorities such as economic modernization and national sovereignty are of the utmost importance, this is ultimately due to their linkage with the legitimacy and longevity of the CCP's ruling status—its survival—in China.

C. CHINA DEALING WITH UNCERTAINTY

The second functional variable of both the rational or cybernetic approaches is how the national leadership reconciles uncertainty during the decision-making process. As illustrated below, Beijing uses cybernetic techniques when confronting situations where information is incomplete and risks are high.

1. Channeling Information

One important cybernetic technique for minimizing the potentially paralyzing psychological effects of uncertainty in the decision-making process is to not try to calculate or compare the relative values of all alternatives but instead to simply search sequentially through the existing organizational capabilities for the first response option that meets the necessary requirements for returning the critical variable of interest to tolerable ranges of performance. In order to do this, information on available alternatives and the relative appropriateness of each is restricted to only a few accepted feedback channels that monitor the specific issue—leaders will only hear a message if it approaches the decision-making forum from a certain source. Often these official channels are part of a cybernetic servomechanism maintained by the issue-specific,

[132] Lam, *Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao Era*, 249.

professionalized institution responsible for handling that particular problem area. Although this trait may result in the leadership not appreciating key, potentially decisive information available in channels outside the accepted institutional conduits, since decision makers are not overloaded by information from all angles, uncertainty over whether available information is complete and perfect or whether the chosen alternative is the very best alternative possible is held to a minimum throughout the process. Complete information, as required by the rational approach, is not necessary for action.

Prior U.S. National Security Council Senior Director for Asian Affairs Kenneth Lieberthal describes three general channels information may take to reach the central leadership. The first is the practice of democratic centralism where a wide array of alternative inputs from various senior leaders is encouraged during the assessment phase of the decision process (explained above as collective, consensus-driven, consultative decision making). The second channel is through the various support organizations made up of specialized institutions that contribute to the LSG and other administrative work meetings prior to an issue reaching a consensus decision in the center.[133] Each LSG sits at the apex of an extensive, multi-tiered, multi-bureaucracy support organization (*xitong*) that works to gather and process relevant information in order to give their leaders the knowledge that is needed to make decisions. Often much of the actual filtering of information is conducted in critical offices sometimes referred to as information "gateways" (*kou*) such as the CCP General Office and Secretariat, the GSD of the CMC, or the Foreign Affairs General Office in the MFA where it is subjected to the scrutiny and judgment of an extensive network of private secretaries (*mishu*) that serve the individual needs of their leaders.[134] Information is power, and therefore control of the information is a critical function throughout the organization that, while reducing uncertainty, shapes outcomes.

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[133] Lieberthal, *Governing China*, 192–94, 212–14.

[134] James C. Mulvenon and Michael S. Chase, "The Role of *Mishus* in the Chinese Political System: Change and Continuity," in *China's Leadership in the 21st Century: The Rise of the Fourth Generation*, eds. David M. Finkelstein and Maryanne Kivlehan (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2003), 140–151.

2. "Reactive" Decision Making

According to Chinese scholar Xi Liping, Chinese decision making is unlike the rational processes of Western-style decision making in that instead of acting to reach specific goals or strategic objectives, Chinese leaders monitor the international situation and "make reactive decisions" based on their perceptions of critical factors.[135] Although this use of "reactive" to describe Beijing does not intend to portray Chinese leadership as being unable to proactively implement reforms or take action on the international stage, it suggests that Beijing responds to issues—and searches for alternatives—in a more narrowly focused manner than rational approaches dictate is necessary.

Additionally, when reacting to problems, China further narrows the range of possible decisions (and consequently minimizes uncertainty) by making non-compensatory choices. This means that when debating the appropriateness or acceptability of a certain alternative, its strength in one dimension does not make up for its weakness in another. For example, if a particular course of action offers the chance to boost the international perception of China's military strength and courage when facing up to the United States, but consequently threatens to derail economic cooperation that is critical to China's modernization and ultimately the legitimacy and survival of the CCP, Beijing will likely not consider it and will instead look for a more appropriate option.

D. CHINA ADAPTING TO CHANGE

The third functional variable tested here is the manner in which Beijing adapts to change. As David Shambaugh has observed in a recent study on the adaptation of the CCP, systemic adaptation is the key for a long life of any political party or system of governance.[136] As new or refined information becomes available, there must be a way to incorporate it into the decision-making process. As the environment changes, the decision-making mechanisms of China's central government have remained flexible and

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[135] Xi Liping, "Crisis Management in China and in the United States: A Comparative Study," in *Managing Sino-American Crises: Case Studies and* Analysis, eds. Michael Swaine, Zhang Tuosheng, and Danielle Cohen (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), 153.

[136] Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party*, 5.

adaptable in order to maintain their viability. How this continues to be accomplished yet again indicates the cybernetic character of Beijing's decision-making process.

1. Experiential Learning

While rational decision makers change their assumptions or values based on the goals or strategic objectives for the future, cybernetic decision makers undergo experiential learning by shaping choices around lessons learned from past situations.

The principal vehicle that propelled Deng Xiaoping into power in the late 1970s was a focus on practice rather than stagnant ideological objectives as the guiding philosophy of the CCP. As he articulated at the 1978 11th Party Congress, the party should "seek truth from facts"—a clever use of a 1942 statement by Mao when illustrating the outdated nature of governance under the "28 Bolsheviks." Deng further emphasized through the 1978 "Practice Campaign" the importance of testing the applicability and legitimacy of decisions against the realities of China's environment—rallying his support under the slogan "practice is the sole criterion for truth."[137] In this context, practice is defined as the use of a certain course of action with the expectation *built upon prior experience* that it will function in a certain manner. By shifting the focus from pursuing Maoist goals to doing what was proven by past use to work, Deng was essentially reorienting the Chinese system to adaptation through experiential learning.

Beijing under the current Hu administration has continued to use this precept to guide its actions. At a 1998 ceremony marking the twentieth anniversary of Deng's 1978 "Practice Campaign," Hu commented on the central importance of scientific decision making that tests initiatives through practice—a theme that has throughout the past decade become the basis for a plethora of reforms.[138] As some scholars have realized, China adapts to lessons learned not only from its own trial and error processes, but also in

[137] Roderick MacFarquhar, "The Succession to Mao and the End of Maoism, 1969-82," in *The Politics of China: The Eras of Mao and Deng*, second edition, ed. Roderick MacFarquhar (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 317–18.

[138] Lam, *Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao Era*, 38.

its keen observations of the historical lessons of other governments including the former Soviet Union, former Soviet republics, and other developing nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.[139]

Another strong trend in the Hu leadership is the emphasis on ruling China according to law. As discussed above, the state has made great efforts over the past decade to develop a system of courts for enforcing the statutes of the PRC constitution. While overall this trend has been attributed to the desire for greater institutionalization, it also shows a focus on the instructive qualities of the past since law is most fundamentally anchored in precedent (defined as a previous situation or outcome that is considered later when a similar situation arises).

2. Incremental Change

As described above, cybernetic decision makers look at the failure or success of using certain organizational capabilities or institutional routines in the past. If an option worked and the organization survived the conflict (despite whether it worked the best of all the solutions that could have been chosen), then there often is little incentive to introduce major change into the system. Consequently, change occurs only gradually or incrementally, slowed by institutional resistance and an overall shortage of resources. Only when a situation arises that proves a gross inadequacy of current organization capabilities will the government introduce major change to its repertoire of institutional routines. Contrary to popular complaints of bureaucratic "red-tape," incremental change does not necessarily mean that steady, systemic adaptation is not occurring or that the adaptation is not occurring under a successful strategy of adjustment. As one well-known Yale scholar of incrementalism has observed, "muddling through" by taking a lot of small steps rather than a few big steps can bring dramatic change while allowing an organization to adapt with the lowest risk of inadvertently causing widespread chaos.[140]

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[139] For a look at how China interprets the historical lessons of the Soviet Union, see Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party*.

[140] Lindblom, "Science of 'Muddling Through'" as well as Charles E. Lindblom, "Still Muddling, Not Yet Through," *Public Administration Review* (1979): 517–45.

This type of gradual change with sporadic episodes of rapid adjustment characterizes the Chinese mode of adaptation over the past three decades. With the initial reforms of Deng Xiaoping began an incremental process of adapting to an international economic system by gradually expanding participation in capitalist mechanisms of production—a process that continued through both the Jiang and Hu administrations. Social reforms have occurred slowly but steadily, culminating into the current Hu focus on the development of a "socialist harmonious society." Additionally, movement from the centralized leadership decision-making procedures under Mao as the "paramount leader" to Hu's status as "first among equals" did not occur overnight but rather through two decades of gradual steps. Although intra-party democracy and the institution of village elections have shown progress in political reform, the CCP is careful to constrain the free flow of these practices for fear of rogue democratic movements among the populace.

As a result of Tiananmen Square protests in 1989, the central government was forced to acknowledge that strong reaffirmation of CCP political dominance was needed and a more severe period of change to less-than-adequate institutions was initiated. Similarly, when the first Iraq war occurred, the incredible technological performance of the United States "shocked" Beijing into a realization that the PLA was significantly deficient in its capabilities, consequently leading to a sporadic period of rapid reform and modernization that interrupted an otherwise incremental process of development within the Chinese military. Indeed, the entire process of reform in the past thirty years is often characterized as one akin to "crossing the river by feeling for stones," again emphasizing the experiential and experimental nature of Chinese policy making.

E. SUMMARY

This chapter has tested current trends in Chinese politics for the presence of key functional variables of the cybernetic approach to decision making. It concludes that China routinely and systematically uses cybernetic techniques and mechanisms in its national security and foreign policy decision-making processes. Beijing manages the increased complexity of its current environment by increasing the scale of the

organization through greater institutionalization, developing collective leadership practices, and fragmenting problems. It increases the scope of the organization by promoting professionalization and specialization to handle a variety of issues related to the survival of the CCP. The Chinese leadership minimizes uncertainty when making decisions by being highly selective of the information that it entertains, focusing on only those critical issues related to its core interests, choosing the first acceptable option from its repertoire of capabilities, and relying on the staff components of the organization to channel and filter its information to better focus the limited resources and attention of decision makers. Finally, Beijing adapts to change by employing experiential learning—focusing on the lessons of past performance to determine current choices. Change is incremental punctuated by sporadic episodes of large-scale, failure-induced adjustment.

After illustrating the applicability of the cybernetic approach at the macro-level of Chinese decision making and political change, this study now narrows its focus in a second test which looks at Beijing's behavior during five specific crisis events over the past decade for indications that the cybernetic approach can yet further explain Chinese decision making in times of stress.

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V. TEST #2: PRC CRISIS CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter further narrows the focus of this study by examining Chinese decision making during periods of crisis in order to test the applicability of the cybernetic model. Since periods of crisis are often unanticipated, the decision-making process of the country of interest is typically less prepared for dealing with the conflict. This often results in miscommunication and even struggle between institutional hierarchies, mixed signals between actors, and less than perfectly coordinated outcomes—thereby offering the outside observer a chance to view some of the internal decision mechanisms that under normal circumstances might not be as easily discernible. Crises are also of great relevance in international relations research since it presents high-stakes situations that, if mishandled, could lead to severe damage to multiple countries involved. For both of these reasons, this study takes a detailed look at Beijing's behavior during times of stress.

B. REVIEW OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND PRC CRISIS DECISION-MAKING LITERATURE

By simple definition, a crisis is a situation that poses intense difficulty, trouble, or danger; a time when critically important decisions must be made.[141] Crisis management includes the actions taken to contain and resolve a crisis. Recent crisis-oriented studies have refined this definition to apply specifically to political-military crises in international relations by differentiating between what constitutes a foreign policy crisis in a single state as opposed to the characteristics of an international crisis between two or more states. A *foreign policy crisis* in one state typically has three factors present: there is a threat to one or more of the government's basic values, there is a limited amount of time to respond to the threat, and there is a greater than normal chance of the crisis entering into military conflict if not successfully resolved.[142] An *international crisis*

[141] Lindberg, *The Oxford American College Dictionary*, 324.

[142] Jonathan Wilkenfeld, "Concepts and Methods in the Study of International Crisis Management," in *Managing Sino-American Crises: Case Studies and Analysis*, eds. Michael Swaine, Zhang Tuosheng, and Danielle Cohen (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), 104.

displays two other characteristics that make it therefore applicable to international interactions. First, there is an observable change in the nature and intensity of interactions between two or more states. Second, this shift in communication results in a fundamental change in the status of relationship between the conflicted states and ultimately an alteration of the international environmental structure.[143] Since "an international crisis begins with a disruptive action or event that creates a foreign policy crisis for one or more states," there is naturally a greater quantity of foreign policy crises than international crises.[144]

These definitions are different, however, than those used by other scholars in the field and thus illustrates a significant difference in the understanding of crisis. According to Charles Hermann, in addition to the characteristics mentioned above, a crisis comes as a surprise to national decision makers.[145] This raises the question of whether a tense event that is foreseen (possibly a flashpoint in a long-standing disagreement between two countries) qualifies as a crisis. This debate often combines with another—the differences between decision makers of various nations regarding the nature of crises. What may constitute a crisis in the minds of decision makers in one nation may not be met with the same sense of surprise or urgency in the minds of decision makers in another—a fact that leads some scholars to debate whether some episodes of "crisis management" is really crisis decision making or simply normal decision making in times of non-crisis stress.[146]

One of the greatest challenges in crisis research (especially in using quantitative methods) is the relative infrequency of international crisis events, especially in any particular country or region.[147] A helpful way to expand the available sample size of

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[143] Wilkenfeld, "Concepts and Methods," 104.

[144] Michael Brecher and Jonathan Wilkenfeld, *A Study of Crisis* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 5.

[145] Charles F. Hermann, "International Crisis as a Situational Variable," in *International Politics and Foreign Policy*, ed. J. N. Rosenau (New York: Free Press, 1969), 414.

[146] Frank Miller and Andrew Scobell, "Decisionmaking under Stress" or "Crisis Management?": In Lieu of a Conclusion," in *Chinese National Security Decisionmaking Under Stress*, eds. Andrew Scobell and Larry M. Wortzel (Carlisle, P.A.: Strategic Studies Institute, 2005), 229–47. This and other useful resources may be assessed at http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/.

[147] Wilkenfeld, "Concepts and Methods," 104.

crisis events is to search for *near crisis* situations that, although not qualifying as full-blown crises, allow one to observe a country's leadership decision-making structure and process at work in resolving extraordinary problems (the method used in the case study analysis below). A "near crisis" has been defined as "a conflict that approaches the intensity of an international crisis in the following way: each involved actor perceives a threat to basic values and a finite time for response but *not* an increased probability of military hostilities."[148] For example, in the case of Sino-American relations, while the Taiwan Strait crisis of 1995-1996 qualifies as a full-scale international crisis, the accidental bombing of the Chinese Belgrade embassy or the 2001 EP-3 collision incident are classified as near crises. The advantage of conducting research on samples that include near crisis events is that there are more events over shorter, more specific time frames available for study. The disadvantage of using near crises as case studies in crisis management is that the dynamics of a crisis are arguably different under the imminent threat of military conflict.

Although several individual studies have analyzed specific crisis or near crisis cases in Chinese history, there have been relatively few resources that have taken a systematic approach to analyzing multiple events over the last decade. This study recognizes the contributions of two particular works that provide a good starting point for anyone researching recent Chinese crises. Michael Swaine and Zhang Tuosheng with Danielle Cohen have compiled and edited a helpful collection of articles in *Managing Sino-American Crises: Case Studies and Analysis* that emerged from a 2004 conference on crisis management held in Beijing and includes contributions from leading American and Chinese scholars. Andrew Scobell and Larry Wortzel, professors at the Army Strategic Studies Institute, have compiled contributions in *Chinese National Security Decisionmaking under Stress* from another conference on Chinese crisis management also held in 2004. Although these compilations are limited in their scope of cases and approaches, they present a helpful overview of recent developments in the subject.

[148] Wilkenfeld, "Concepts and Methods," 111. Wilkenfeld cites Patrick James as the originator of this term and its definition.

C. CASE #1: BOMBING OF PRC EMBASSY IN BELGRADE (1999)

1. Case Details

On May 7, 1999, two American Air Force B-2 bombers delivered multiple (GPS)-guided, 2,000 pound, joint direct attack munitions (JDAMs) to preset aim points in an office building in Belgrade as part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air campaign against Yugoslavia. The target had been nominated by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (the only target nominated by the CIA) as an enemy Serbian military supply headquarters and verified through two defense databases on target locations. However, undetected in some maps was the fact that two years prior, in 1997, the building had been purchased and inhabited as the PRC embassy in Belgrade. The unintentional bombing resulted in the deaths of three Chinese "journalists," twenty injured Chinese citizens, and extensive damage to the PRC structure.

By the morning of May 8, Beijing had accumulated very little information on the incident and the extent of damages (much of this coming through open source reporting and telephone calls from Yugoslavian-stationed Chinese media personnel). Through the MFA, the Chinese government responded harshly against what it assessed as an intentional attack on the sovereignty of the PRC. The PRC media (largely state controlled) ran the story in gory detail and, with the aid of the central government, crowds of protestors began to build around the American embassy in Beijing as well as other American diplomatic and commercial sites in other cities in China, even being at times bused in by the authorities. Most Sino-American diplomatic contacts were halted, American navy port calls in Chinese cities were discontinued, and scheduled Sino-American official meetings were cancelled. Despite multiple American apologies and actions that extended over the next few months, the Chinese government was slow to resume relations and resolve the conflict. Finally in August 1999, a deal was reached that compensated both countries for damages incurred and after a meeting between PRC President Jiang Zemin and American President Clinton at an Asian economic conference, relations were fully restored.

Although several American analysts including Kurt Campbell, Richard Weitz, Paul Godwin, and former deputy assistant secretary of state for relations with China Susan Shirk (stationed in Beijing at the time of the attack and intimately involved in the crisis management efforts to defuse the conflict) have offered insightful accounts of the crisis, due to the opacity of meetings of the Chinese central leadership, few inside details are available for analysis of the actual Chinese decision-making process. One account that has provided the most in the form of a detailed analysis of the Chinese government side of this event comes from Professor Wu Baiyi, a prominent scholar on European studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. His account along with other details illustrates strong cybernetic tendencies within the central leadership process.

2. Case Analysis: Managing Complexity

During this crisis, the supreme decision-making body was the PBSC and the larger Politburo, which met multiple times over the course of the conflict. Since several of the initial meetings were conducted as emergency meetings, it is likely that the central organ of power was the PBSC headed by Party General Secretary and PRC President Jiang Zemin. When Vice President Hu Jintao addressed the Chinese public on May 10, he highlighted the collective nature of the central government decision-making process by encouraging the protestors to "unite closely around the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China with comrade Jiang Zemin at the core."[149] These meetings were collective decision-making efforts where decision was based on consensus and institutional routine—thereby demonstrating an effort to expand the scale of Beijing's organizational capabilities to deal with this unanticipated issue.[150]

Chinese leaders relied heavily on specialized individuals and institutions to advise the central leadership and implement decisions. Since the scope of the crisis spread over

[149] Text of Hu's televised speech as cited in Kurt M. Campbell and Richard Weitz, "The Chinese Embassy Bombing: Evidence of Crisis Management?," in *Managing Sino-American Crises: Case Studies and Analysis*, eds. Michael Swaine, Zhang Tuosheng, and Danielle Cohen (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), 331.

[150] Wu Baiyi, "Chinese Crisis Management During the 1999 Embassy Bombing Incident," in *Managing Sino-American Crises: Case Studies and Analysis*, eds. Michael Swaine, Zhang Tuosheng, and Danielle Cohen (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), 356–57.

both the domestic and international environments and covered most areas of foreign affairs, a plethora of specialized departments were included in the decision-making process, "each implementing mandates issued by the paramount leadership" through the SOPs of their respective organization.[151] The problem was fragmented among a wide array of institutions. Since the MFA was the primary coordinating body for policy implementation, it is likely that the crisis management center was the FALSG supported by a variety of specialized foreign affairs analysts and staff personnel and tightly supervised and directed by the PBSC. Under certain circumstances (often when domestic concerns were at stake), higher level coordination meetings would occur between certain CCP departments and the State Council where ministerial officials would "discuss the division of labor and how to act in their own spheres."[152] In turn, these specific ministers would coordinate within their individual institutions on how to accomplish their respective responsibilities.

Existing organizational capabilities formed the repertoire of available alternatives and determined the nature of the chosen outcome. As noted, the MFA was the principal organization for conducting bilateral negotiations throughout the crisis. Not only was it an MFA overseas facility that was bombed, but the foreign affairs bureaucracy was best equipped to handle a diplomatic crisis with the United States. As a result, MFA ministers and ambassadors became the primary interlockers in Sino-American negotiations.[153] Diplomacy rather than other tools such as military power became the appropriate method of signaling. However, as already mentioned, this crisis involved more than merely foreign affairs. For cases involving the Chinese public, the Ministry of Public Security dispatched security forces to contain the crowds.[154] The Ministry of Education was used to coordinate student protests.[155] According to interviews with Chinese media personnel, the CCP Department of Propaganda and the Xinhua news agency were used to

[151] Wu, "Chinese Crisis Management During the 1999 Embassy Bombing Incident," 357.

[152] Ibid., 360.

[153] Campbell and Weitz, "The Chinese Embassy Bombing," 332.

[154] Ibid., 331.

[155] Wu, "Chinese Crisis Management During the 1999 Embassy Bombing Incident," 360.

manipulate the protests and to echo support for leadership decisions and were explicitly assigned the mission to "stabilize the nation and protect people from the possible blindness of their long-term goals.[156] Even the PLA was sent on a mission to Belgrade to transport PRC embassy personnel back to China.[157]

From these details, it appears that once again, the cybernetic approach is more applicable to understanding Beijing's behavior during crises than the rational model. When confronted with a complex, unanticipated problem, the PRC leadership used cybernetic mechanisms and institutional routines to determine a suitable course of action. Rather than gathering all information and employing an exhaustive search for the single best alternative for the situation, the leadership relied on the existing institutional capabilities and specialization to inform and isolate an appropriate response.

3. Case Analysis: Dealing with Uncertainty

As discussed above, strict channeling of information during a crisis is a cybernetic method for reducing uncertainty in the decision-making process. This tendency was heavily demonstrated in the Belgrade bombing event. Following the incident, Sino-American information channels typically available for communication were restricted or disregarded. Military-to-military exchanges were halted.[158] Several existing bilateral diplomatic channels over unrelated issues were also put on hold.[159] Even calls from President Clinton to President Jiang Zemin on the executive hotline were unanswered by the Chinese leadership for the first several days of the crisis.[160] The only substantial channel for communication that remained open was either the MFA office in China or the MFA-supervised PRC embassy to the United States in Washington. In this case, information was so confined that it presented a hindrance to effective crisis management

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[156] Wu, "Chinese Crisis Management During the 1999 Embassy Bombing Incident," 360. Based on Wu's interviews of media personnel on December 20, 2003.

[157] Ibid., 353.

[158] Campbell and Weitz, "The Chinese Embassy Bombing," 333.

[159] Ibid., 332.

[160] Wu, "Chinese Crisis Management During the 1999 Embassy Bombing Incident," 359.

in that for a significant time in the initial period, communication between the United States and China was largely nonproductive or nonexistent.

Cybernetic logic dictates that since decision makers are simply choosing the first acceptable option from their repertoire of capabilities, perfect information is not required for a suitable course of action to be selected. This trait was also demonstrated in this crisis. Since the incident was unanticipated, and little information was available prior to the leadership having to make an official response, Chinese decision makers acted while being desperately short of complete information of the situation. Chinese intelligence agencies were unable to complete even a precursory analysis prior to the first emergency meeting of the central leadership that set the course for Chinese action.[161]

4. Case Analysis: Adapting to Change

There are also strong indications that experiential learning played a significant role in shaping both the domestic and international aspects of Beijing's decision. On the domestic front, the Chinese leadership, while initially using the protests as a negotiating tactic,[162] was also concerned about letting the protests go too far—a concern that arose from memories of two prior experiences. One of these experiences involved the large parades that turned into the tragic and damaging Tiananmen Square student-led democratic protests in 1989 that led to Jiang Zemin first taking office.[163] The other experience was the large demonstration of the Falun Gong group outside the central leadership headquarters that had occurred just two weeks before the bombing. According to insider accounts, both of these events had a larger than expected influence on Jiang Zemin and other leaders.[164] As a result, the leadership maintained a cautious attitude regarding the management of Chinese public opinion throughout the conflict.

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[161] Wu, "Chinese Crisis Management During the 1999 Embassy Bombing Incident," 355.

[162] Paul H. B. Godwin, "Decisionmaking under Stress: The Unintentional Bombing of China's Belgrade Embassy and the EP-3 Collision," in *Chinese National Security Decisionmaking Under Stress,* eds. Andrew Scobell and Larry Wortzel (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2005), 165–66.

[163] Wu, "Chinese Crisis Management During the 1999 Embassy Bombing Incident," 362.

[164] Susan Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 215.

In the international scene, China used a different approach than that employed in the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis where the PRC was largely isolated as the aggressor within the international community. In this case, China quickly sought and received the legitimacy of the international community by demanding that an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council be convened to discuss the issue and citing the bombing as a violation of China's sovereignty and international law as established in the UN charter.[165]

D. CASE #2: F-8/EP-3E MIDAIR COLLISION (2001)

1. Case Details

On April 1, 2001, a U.S. Navy EP-3E reconnaissance plane on a routine patrol was intercepted by two Chinese F-8II fighters over international airspace approximately 70 miles southeast of Hainan Island above the South China Sea. One of the F-8 pilots, when executing a dangerous maneuver in extremely close proximity to the slower, larger EP-3, made a tragic mistake and collided with the reconnaissance plane. Consequently, the Chinese fighter jet crashed, and the pilot, Lieutenant Commander Wang Wei, was lost. The other F-8, unharmed, returned to base. The EP-3, having received extensive damage, plummeted several thousand feet before American pilot, Lieutenant Shane Osborne, could stabilize it. Emergency announcements were issued to all receivers in the area, and twenty minutes later, the plane was landed at the PLAN Lingshui airfield on Hainan Island. The crew of twenty-four American service members emerged from the EP-3 into the custody of the PLA where they remained for a long eleven days while Washington and Beijing negotiated one of the most severe near-crisis events of the past twenty years. Although the crew was allowed to return to the United States on April 12, the EP-3 was searched by the PRC military and was returned in pieces later on July 3.

Crisis management between the two countries proceeded through multiple phases of tough resolve and bilateral cooperation with negotiations stalling over questions of who was at fault for the collision, legal questions of whether the EP-3 was authorized by international law to make an emergency landing in Chinese territory, and, when there, if

[165] Campbell and Weitz, "The Chinese Embassy Bombing," 333.

it was immune to search and seizure by Chinese authorities. From the start, Beijing adopted a faulty story of the collision that showed the United States completely responsible for the incident and insisted on a formal apology from Washington to the Chinese people. Since American leaders did not agree with Beijing's view of events and did not accept responsibility for the collision, for violating international law with patrols in international airspace, or for violating international law with an emergency landing, a formal apology admitting guilt was unacceptable.

Although few details of the internal decision-making process are available for observation, much analysis of this particular case has been conducted by a variety of American and Chinese diplomats and scholars. Some of the sources that have informed observations included here are found in accounts by Admiral (retired) Dennis Blair (then Commander of United States Pacific Command and intimately involved in crisis management efforts), veteran analysts James Mulvenon, Paul Godwin, Shirley Kan, Susan Shirk, and Chinese scholar Zhang Tousheng. In a useful report compiled and edited by the Congressional Research Service under the direction of Shirley Kan, a variety of viewpoints of this crisis are given. Two provocative questions have plagued American analysts: 1) why was Beijing's story of the incident so different from the account of the collision provided by the American crew and display such variety even between Chinese civilian and military authorities, and 2) why did the Chinese government take so long to respond to Washington's attempts to establish contact or hold the crew for so long?[166] Mulvenon summarizes two general explanations for these questions—either the Chinese government experienced sharp factional conflict over its response including significant strain in its civil-military affairs, or Beijing was craftily drawing out the process as a method of diplomatic brinkmanship.[167] However, as the

[166] Based in part on comments by then Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage in an interview with Jim Lehrer on 13 April 2001 as cited in Shirley Kan et al., "China-U.S. Aircraft Collision Incident of April 2001: Assessments and Policy Implications," *Congressional Report to Congress RL30946* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2001), 2–3.

[167] James Mulvenon, "Civil-Military Relations and the EP-3 Crisis: A Content Analysis," *Chinese Leadership Monitor* 1 (2002): 7–8. http://www.hoover.org/publications/clm/issues/2906891.html (accessed December 15, 2009).

below observations indicate, there is a third dimension of this incident as well—the cybernetic nature of Chinese politics during the crisis.

2. Case Analysis: Managing Complexity

To accommodate the crisis-induced complexity that was introduced into the decision-making process, Beijing relied upon cybernetic tendencies to increase the scale and scope of its capacity. It employed the consensus-driven mechanisms of its operational decision-making body, the PBSC, to bring together the top tier of the party, military, and state bureaucracies to determine a course of action and promulgate general guidance for handling the crisis.[168] Although some observers have used this case to support claims that Beijing's decision making was overly centralized and that Chinese leadership experienced a lack of consensus with civilian-military factional disputes, other insightful sources have pointed to Jiang Zemin's confidence in the collective leadership process as demonstrated by his beginning a two-week trip to Latin America only three days after the collision while Chinese decisions were being first made—a trip that would likely not have occurred had Jiang felt that the core of the central decision-making body was unstable or unable to collectively function.[169] Additionally, although the incident was most closely related to the Chinese military and national security domains, the official statements following the first collective leadership meeting were from the State Council's MFA and Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin, further illustrating that the accepted course of action had been agreed upon through collective consensus and executed through a collective process.[170]

Beijing also managed the increased complexity following the event by increasing the scope of the organization's capacity through its reliance on specialized, institutional capabilities and identities. Following the emergency meeting of the PBSC, a variety of institutions took action to handle the crisis. Since diplomacy as a whole was the

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[168] Zhang Tuosheng, "The Sino-American Aircraft Collision: Lessons for Crisis Management," in *Managing Sino-American Crises: Case Studies and Analysis*, eds. Michael Swaine, Zhang Tuosheng, and Danielle Cohen (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), 409.

[169] Kan et al., "Aircraft Collision Incident," 11.

[170] Ibid. Also see Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower*, 238.

preferred response, the MFA was given the lead from the start and made the initial public statement, which articulated the official position of the PRC government on the collision and demanded an American apology.[171] The MFA was given the responsibility and authority for coordinating initiatives, thereby becoming the crisis management center for negotiations.[172] Given the above knowledge of the Chinese foreign affairs structure, this was likely accomplished through the FALSG, which had the authority to mobilize institutional resources throughout the organization. Yet despite this formal coordination of effort, the individual identities of the institutions shaped slightly different types of public statements over the following days. The MFA with its identity of diplomacy focused on the potential damage to Sino-American bilateral relations and pressed for a quick resolution. The military focused on the issue that was central to its identity of national defense—getting the United States to stop "spying" on China's military buildup along its southern coastlines. The internal security services and the Department of Propaganda focused on the potential instability of public unrest.[173]

3. Case Analysis: Dealing with Uncertainty

As also demonstrated in the Belgrade bombing crisis, the Chinese government limited uncertainty during crisis negotiations and prevented a premature response by restricting the information entering the decision-making process. This is most visibly seen in the limited communication channels for contact with the United States. As Admiral Blair observed, in the initial hours and days following the incident, neither the PLA nor the MFA would answer American phone calls.[174] Chinese scholar Zhang Tuosheng observed that much of the first few days of the crisis were characterized by only low-level contacts between the two sides with no substantial mid or high-level

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[171] CMC Vice Chairman PLA General Zhang Wannian reassured the international community that the chosen resolution would occur through "diplomatic channels" as cited in Mulvenon, "EP-3 Crisis," 7.

[172] Zhang, "The Sino-American Aircraft Collision," 395.

[173] Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower*, 235–37.

[174] Dennis C. Blair and David B. Bonfili, "The April 2001 EP-3 Incident: The U.S. Point of View," in *Managing Sino-American Crises: Case Studies and Analysis*, eds. Michael Swaine, Zhang Tuosheng, and Danielle Cohen (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), 380.

communication.[175] He goes further to conclude that although Sino-American communication channels are adequate for normal affairs in times of peace, Beijing's and Washington's behavior resulted in many of the existing communication channels not working during the crisis.[176]

Throughout the crisis, the only accepted gateway for incoming communication from the American side to reach the Chinese central government was through the foreign affairs apparatus. However, within Beijing, most of the information it was processing was solely from the PLA. Although limited information flow reduced the potential effects of uncertainty as the central leadership adopted a course of action, the available options were based tightly on only a few strands of information (some of which proved inaccurate) and set the tone for the duration of the conflict.[177] Information was synthesized at only a few points in the process such as the PBSC, and even then, full coordination was likely hindered by not having professional military representation other than Hu himself. These details illustrate two cybernetic tendencies—fragmentation and restricted information flow.

4. Case Analysis: Adapting to Change

This crisis case strongly demonstrates two important cybernetic traits of adaptation—experiential learning and incremental change. As Admiral Blair and David Bonfili noted in their analysis of the conflict, "actions and attitudes developed before 2001 were important factors in the behavior of both sides during the April 2001 EP-3 crisis."[178] Other analysts and diplomats have remarked on the repeated use of two prior incidents in particular as instructive references by both Chinese leadership as well as the PRC media throughout the event. As two Hong Kong-based professors have observed, the experiences of the July 1993 *Yinhe* incident as well as the 1999 Belgrade embassy bombing led Beijing and large numbers of the Chinese public to automatically conclude

[175] Zhang, "The Sino-American Aircraft Collision,"413.

[176] Ibid., 414.

[177] Mulvenon, "EP-3 Crisis," 5.

[178] Blair and Bonfili, "The April 2001 EP-3 Incident," 378.

"that the air collision incident had been the inevitable outcome of U.S. hegemonism provoking China and treating China with hostility."[179] As illustrated by the Belgrade bombing, the Chinese leadership estimated it could again use the crisis to place the United States in a position where it would have to apologize for its actions and compensate China for damages.[180] The past experience with the Belgrade bombing had also shown Beijing the potential danger of letting the media rile up the public to the point of protest and, therefore, Beijing handled the media with a much tighter rein and forced students to remain on their campuses.[181] In order to preempt radical rhetoric in the press, the State Council Information Office even held briefings with news editors explaining that the collision was not an American attack against China.[182] As described above, this pattern of learning primarily from past experiences (and appraising the performance of responses used in a past encounters) rather than taking lessons from assessments of future goals is typical of cybernetic decision making and is a strong departure from the rational paradigm. Following the "if it is not broke, keep using it" mentality, an option that was somewhat successful in the past will likely be reused in what is assessed to be a similar situation.

A second cybernetic tendency evidenced in this case is incremental adjustment. Although Beijing recognized from the 1999 Belgrade bombing crisis that it needed improvement in its crisis management procedures in order to more promptly respond to unanticipated situations, no changes were made in the two years prior to the EP-3 case[183]—likely due to institutional inertia and the assessment that China had experienced success in the Belgrade resolution with organizational performance as it was. Despite

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[179] Joseph Y. S. Cheng and King-Lun Ngok, "The 2001 "Spy" Plane Incident Revisited: The Chinese Perspective," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 9:1 (2004): 69. The *Yinhe* incident in 1993 occurred when U.S. authorities accused a Chinese freighter of transporting chemical weapons to Iran and demanded Beijing to order the vessel to return and submit to a boarding. Beijing refused, and the vessel was tailed by U.S. navy vessels and aircraft and was blocked from docking in its scheduled foreign ports. Later, the U.S. navy boarded the vessel and reported that nothing was found.

[180] Zhang, "The Sino-American Aircraft Collision," 393.

[181] Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower*, 237.

[182] Ibid.

[183] Blair and Bonfili, "The April 2001 EP-3 Incident," 377. Zhang, "The Sino-American Aircraft Collision," 413.

trends in near collisions between other EP-3 aircraft and increasingly more aggressive PLAN pilots (a topic that had been discussed between Chinese and American officials repeatedly over the year prior to the collision[184]), no changes were made in operating procedures to avoid a disaster.[185] Furthermore, even after the collision, despite Beijing demanding in negotiations that a meeting be arranged to develop procedures for avoiding another collision in future intercepts, post-crisis Sino-American discussions on the topic "never made any headway"[186] and Beijing made only slight changes in its military behavior by having PLAN pilots keep more distance when tailing American reconnaissance flights—once again demonstrating the tendency for institutions to resist significant, rapid change.

E. CASE #3: SARS OUTBREAK (2002-03)

1. Case Details

On November 16, 2002, the first case of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) occurred in Fushan City, one of the many urban centers in Guandong Province in southeast China. Over the next two months, the contagious disease spread through Guandong unchecked and both military and civilian hospitals incurred a rising number of cases. Information was deliberately underreported to the central government through both the provincial as well as PLA channels largely due to a desire to not interrupt sensitive political sessions of the 16th National Party Congress that had convened in November to complete the transition of leadership from Hu Jintao to Jiang Zemin.

By late January, the rising casualties had made it evident to provincial officials that there was a problem, but only a vague travel warning was issued and insufficient information was provided to the public to assist with stopping the spread of the disease. By February, the illness had spread beyond Guandong's borders to other provinces, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Canada, and Singapore. However, under the direction of the CCP General Propaganda Department, the media was required to report only that the situation

[184] Kan et al., "Aircraft Collision Incident," 14.

[185] Zhang, "The Sino-American Aircraft Collision," 413.

[186] Blair and Bonfili, "The April 2001 EP-3 Incident," 387.

was under control—a claim that clearly was not the case. The PRC government refused to entertain scientific evidence that the disease was a highly contagious form viral pneumonia (the accepted party line was that it was related to a non-deadly strain of sexually transmitted chlamydia[187]) and persistently covered up the extent of the casualties, which by now had risen to several hundred cases and over thirty dead.[188] Finally, after a Chinese military doctor, upon observing the government's deliberate attempt to underreport the number of cases, leaked to the Chinese Central Television and Hong Kong media (which consequently reached the international media) the true extent of the contagion, the international community began to hastily cancel travel to China. The World Health Organization issued a global alert on March 12, and several countries adopted defensive procedures to protect themselves against the disease. As a result, Beijing was forced to acknowledge the cover-up in mid-April and quickly initiated a mass mobilization effort to contain and eradicate SARS. From April to June 2003, over 30,000 PRC citizens were quarantined in Beijing alone (sometimes through force).[189]

Despite SARS being successfully contained by July 2003 through a massive mobilization effort (after a total 5,327 PRC citizens were infected and 349 died), the fact that the contagion had been able to build for five months while being covered up by the Chinese government has drawn intense criticism and has been explored for indications into the character of the PRC crisis decision-making process. A compilation of articles edited by John Wong and Zheng Yongnian entitled *The SARS Epidemic: Challenges to China's Crisis Management*, official statements from the PRC, and other veteran analysts of Chinese affairs inform much of the detail provided below.

2. Case Analysis: Managing Complexity

Although many have pointed to the interagency coordination issues as evidence of factionalism within the central government (possibly between the Jiang and Hu factions),

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[187] Susan M. Puska, "SARS 2002–2003: A Case Study in Crisis Management," in *Chinese National Security Decisionmaking under Stress*, eds. Andrew Scobell and Larry Wortzel (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2005), 89.

[188] Ibid., 106.

[189] Ibid., 91.

as two Chinese authors have remarked, the climate of the senior leadership—once the issue of SARS had been acknowledged—was one based on the consensus of collective leadership at the highest level. On April 17, a meeting of the PBSC presided over by Hu Jintao decided that SARS was a top priority that required the collective effort of all bureaucracies to fight.[190] Following a meeting of the Politburo chaired by Hu Jintao in the following week, "there appeared to be a closing of ranks to deal with the SARS outbreak."[191] After this meeting, key figures in the CCP made public statements to rally various party, government, society, and military organizations to join behind the effort to fight SARS behind the leadership of Hu Jintao.[192] Central government pressure on second tier departments and ministries as well as provincial and local governments helped to create a unified response.

To handle the complicated nature of a comprehensive SARS response, responsibilities and authorities were fragmented among a repertoire of institutions. A central Leading Group for Prevention and Treatment of SARS, headed by Hu Jintao with Premier Wen Jiabao, PLA GSD Director Liang Guanglie (member of the CMC and current Minister of National Defense), as well as ministers of health from the State Council was established as the senior coordination group for the effort.[193] The State Council formed a SARS Control Headquarters on 23 April, and the newly appointed Minister of Health Wu Yi was placed in charge of central-to-local implementation efforts.[194] Although some authors have pointed at the resulting bureaucratic fragmentation and conflict at lower levels as a principal hindrance of response efforts (especially conflicting agendas arising between the CCP Department of Propaganda and

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[190] Lai Hongyi, "Local Management of SARS in China: Guangdong and Beijing," in *The SARS Epidemic: Challenges to China's Crisis Management,* eds. John Wong and Zheng Yongnian (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2004), 91.

[191] Zheng Yongnian and Lye Liang Fook, "SARS and China's Political System," in *The SARS Epidemic: Challenges to China's Crisis Management,* eds. John Wong and Zheng Yongnian (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2004), 61.

[192] Ibid., 62.

[193] Lewis and Xue, *Imagined Enemies,* 95.

[194] Lai, "Local Management of SARS in China," 93.

the Ministry of Health over information flow,[195]) this arrangement still illustrates the central government's attempts to manage complexity by increasing the scale of the organization through fragmentation of responsibilities and authority.

The central government also focused on specialization to increase the scope of the existing institutional capabilities (at the time consisting of an extremely limited repertoire for handling epidemics). On April 9, 2003, Beijing announced that a group of twelve specialists had been formed to advise central government decision makers on SARS response options. This group included five engineering professors and seven professors and doctors "who are the leading experts in the fields of infectious diseases, epidemics and respiratory diseases."[196] Implementation efforts were also focused into specialist groups. The National SARS Headquarters under the direction of Minister of Health Wu Yi was organized into eleven specialty teams covering prevention and control, quarantines, research, logistics, rural services, public relations, social security, education, Beijing coordination, general administration, and foreign cooperation.[197] According to PRC embassy statement, expert-based inspection teams were sent to thirty-one provinces, municipalities, and regions to supervise SARS efforts in the field.[198]

3. Case Analysis: Dealing with Uncertainty

This case greatly illustrates how the CCP controls information in an attempt to reduce uncertainty. As previously noted, knowledge of the true extent of the spreading epidemic was not pushed up through the provincial channels or the PLA channel of communication to the central government. Although some have blamed this on a cultural tendency to minimize the reporting of any bad news in times of high politics,[199] this

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[195] Zheng and Lye, "SARS and China's Political System," 58.

[196] "Specialist group formed in Beijing to fight SARS," *Xinhua News Agency*, 9 April 2003. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2003-04/09/content_823589.htm (accessed February 15, 2010).

[197] Gu Xin, "Healthcare Regime Change and the SARS Outbreak in China," in *The SARS Epidemic: Challenges to China's Crisis Management*, eds. John Wong and Zheng Yongnian (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2004), 151.

[198] "China's Efforts on the Prevention and Control of SARS," Statement by Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Kingdom of the Netherlands (20June 2003). http://www.chinaembassy.nl/eng/xwdt/t137421.htm (accessed February 15, 2010).

[199] Zheng and Lye, "SARS and China's Political System," 49.

study argues that the effort to restrict information flow is a larger institutional tendency that is seen in various forms throughout the Chinese political system. Since the CCP is focused on survival, it highly values political stability even at the expense of other issues. Therefore, increasing uncertainty in the decision-making process (especially during sensitive times of leadership transition) is seen as threatening the function of the process as a whole. While this explains the reluctance of the provincial leaders and military hospitals to push up harmful information, it also explains the reluctance of the central leadership to acknowledge or respond to potentially damaging information from below. As witnessed by the guidance passed through the CCP Propaganda department to quiet the media as well as the refusal of the government to entertain any research that challenged the accepted party explanation of the disease, the effort to restrict the flow of information to only a few isolated feedback channels, while potentially disastrous to PRC general welfare, was an institutional way to limit uncertainty in the organization's process of decision making.[200]

4. Case Analysis: Adapting to Change

In previous crises, including the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, the 1999 Belgrade bombing and the 2001 EP-3 incidents, the CCP secured its central position of power during crises when leaders placed a high priority on maintaining an untarnished, unified reputation for infallible governing performance. As demonstrated in the early phases of the SARS epidemic, this is a value the CCP once again made efforts to maintain, even in the face of credible opposition—thus demonstrating not only the tendency for Beijing to focus on past lessons but also a potential pitfall for a government that does so.

Additionally, despite "learning" from past cases the need to dramatically reform the PRC crisis management system as well as to introduce additional measures of accountability into the system, as seen in the SARS response, only incremental, creeping changes have been made over the past several years. Of greater significance, however, are the more substantial reforms that were quickly and aggressively introduced when the

[200] Puska, "SARS 2002-2003: A Case Study in Crisis Management," 95.

party was faced by the stark lack of governing performance present in the cover-up from November 2002 to April 2003. The central leadership fired many party officials that had failed to meet performance criteria and large-scale institutional reform was implemented both in the public health as well as crisis management policy sectors. As some Chinese academics have observed, "the government has learned a bitter lesson not to underestimate the importance of investing in such crucial social infrastructure as the healthcare sector if it were to respond promptly to any viral outbreak in the future."[201]

F. CASE #4: PRC UNANNOUNCED ASAT LAUNCH (2007)

1. Case Details

On January 11, 2007, China successfully tested an anti-satellite (ASAT) capability by launching a medium-range ballistic missile from a mobile transporter-erector launcher (TEL) armed with a kinetic kill vehicle (KKV) into a defunct Fengyun-1C Chinese weather satellite approximately 530 miles up in low earth orbit. Upon impact, the satellite was reduced to thousands of pieces of space debris with 950 of those measuring in excess of four inches, representing an existential threat to other satellites from multiple countries as well as the international space station.

Perhaps the development that caused the most concern on behalf of the several nations that were alarmed was not the fact that China had tested a ground-launched ASAT capability but rather the manner in which it did so—Beijing neither notified anyone beforehand nor responded to international inquiries into the event for twelve days afterwards. Although the United States, Australia, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Great Britain, Canada, and the European Union either issued formal protests or raised concerns about the lack of transparency China was showing as to its intentions with testing the ASAT, the MFA initially denied that the event had even occurred and failed to clarify with an official acknowledgement several days later on January 23.[202]

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[201] John Wong and Zheng Yongnian, "SARS and Governance in China," in *The SARS Epidemic: Challenges to China's Crisis Management*, eds. John Wong and Zheng Yongnian (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co., 2004), 10.

[202] Shirley Kan, "China's Anti-Satellite Weapon Test," *Congressional Report to Congress RL22652* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2007), 1–2. http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/84322.pdf (accessed January 30, 2010).

Much remains unknown about the Chinese decision-making process preceding the launch and during the weeks that followed. Some analysts have assessed that the launch was a deliberate attempt by the central leadership to either show resolve over the Taiwan issue or an attempt to pressure the United States to agree to an international ban on space weaponization. Other analysts have speculated that although the launch was deliberate, the international response that followed was not anticipated, leading to a PRC foreign policy crisis.[203] Still other scholars have assessed that the civilian party leadership was not informed of the launch by PLA leaders,[204] leading many to credit a breakdown in civil-military affairs as the reason behind the delayed response.[205] While this study recognizes that lack of interagency coordination can be an issue that delayed Beijing's crisis response decision-making process, it sees the cause more in terms of systemic, institutional constraints rather than a factional competition for power.

2. Case Analysis: Managing Complexity

The first point which erodes the credibility of the "PLA intentionally not informing the CCP" hypothesis is that the ASAT launch was most likely a collective decision in the Politburo or its Standing Committee based on a consensus of senior leaders from all bureaucracies. The chairman of the CMC, Hu Jintao, simultaneously holds the positions General Secretary of the CCP as well as PRC President. Therefore to imply that the senior civilian leadership was not in the know about the launch is to insinuate that the PLA endorses insurrection within its senior ranks—a statement that is unsupported by the demonstrated professionalism of the PLA and its support of the central leadership as illustrated in other crisis cases studied here. Additionally, as one scholar has observed, there are indications that the decision to launch was not short-fused but rather a deliberate decision to test an ASAT that goes back a few years. Despite

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[203] James Mulvenon, "Rogue Warriors? A Puzzled Look at the Chinese ASAT Test," *China Leadership Monitor* 20 (2007): 4. http://www.hoover.org/publications/clm/issues/6301437.html (accessed January 05, 2010).

[204] David E. Sanger and Joseph Kahn, "U.S. Tries to Interpret Silence Over China Test," *New York Times* (21 January 2007).

[205] Bates Gill and Martin Kleiber, "China's Space Odyssey: What the Antisatellite Test Reveals about Decision-making in Beijing," *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2007).

ongoing efforts to get an international ban on space weapons approved (mentioned in both the 2002 and 2004 PRC Defense white papers), PRC efforts of this sort were omitted from the 2006 version—seemingly indicating a desire to conduct ASAT tests without having to contradict official defense policy.[206] Furthermore, as one veteran analyst remarks, "the fates of the PLA and CCP are inextricably intertwined."[207] If the PLA were to willingly undermine the legitimacy and power of the central party leadership it would also undermine the military's own source of survival. This is not to say, however, that the PBSC (and even the CMC), while being aware of the intention to conduct a launch, were fully informed of all the program specifics (this communication of tactical details very possibly did not occur). As is often the case in cybernetic organizations, while fragmentation and specialization as well as restriction of information flow aids the central government in managing complexity and handling uncertainty, it also provides ample room for ongoing actions, while following accepted SOPs and institutional routines, to escape the limited attention of the top-level leaders.

The ASAT launch also illustrates another common cybernetic concept discussed above—the institutional repertoire. Since the field of available options are determined by the existing organizational capabilities at the time of the decision, this incident indicates that Beijing had determined that the use of diplomacy to stall space weaponization and militarization was largely unsuccessful and that a different institutional capability was needed to bring the desired performance—this new capability being the Chinese military.[208] The abruptness of the launch and the failure to manage the international public is indicative of the characteristics of the military institution. As is typical with most militaries, while there are some things that they do well, in comparison to institutions focused solely on diplomacy, their responses are usually more heavy-handed.

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[206] Dean Cheng, *Of Satellites and Stakeholders: China's ASAT Test* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007): 2. http://csis.org/files/ media/csis/pubs/frv07v02.pdf (accessed January 31, 2010).

[207] James Mulvenon, "Straining Against the Yoke? Civil-Military Relations in China after the Seventeenth Party Congress," in *China's Changing Political Landscape: Prospects for Democracy*, ed. Cheng Li (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008), 276.

[208] Eric Hagt, "China's ASAT Test: Strategic Response," *China Security* (2007): 36. http://www.wsichina.org/cs5_3.pdf (accessed January 31, 2010).

In this scenario, the ASAT launch was simply an institutional choice lacking in the diplomatic capabilities necessary to soften the international response.

3. Case Analysis: Dealing with Uncertainty

The ASAT case also illustrates the restricted information flow that accompanies many institutional choices. As each institution focuses on the key variables most dear to its respective survival, it can lose sight of the actions being taken by another institution that could ultimately affect them both. This could explain the lack of coordination between the MFA and the PLA prior to and following the launch. Despite having senior level leadership coordination in the Politburo and the PBSC, the launch could have been seen simply as a programmatic action not deserving deliberation in a LSG where more intimate coordination could have occurred. After all, China had conducted three tests prior to this launch with no international response.[209] Why should this one be any different?

The other pressing issue was why did it take so long for the Chinese government to respond to international inquiries? This too can be explained in the institutional constraints of cybernetic decision making. As previously mentioned, there likely was not a crisis management mechanism in place to handle the fall-out from the launch, since the central government likely underappreciated the fact that the international community would have an issue with what Beijing considered an "ordinary" test (as PLA officials remarked on January 19).[210] Quite possibly, given China's proven slowness in crisis response when not anticipating a conflict, it took twelve days for Beijing to get everyone on the same page. In the meanwhile, all incoming communication was restricted—the leadership simply did not answer the phone.

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[209] Kan, "China's Anti-Satellite Weapon Test," 4.

[210] Li Wenming, Chang Zhe, Zhang Xuefeng, Duan Congcong, and Shi Hua, "Rash US Conjectures on China's Antisatellite Weapon," *Huanqiu shibao*, 19 January 2007 as cited in Mulvenon, "Rogue Warriors," 1.

4. Case Analysis: Adapting to Change

Beijing likely shaped its organizational routines leading up to the 2007 ASAT launch around lessons learned from the previous three launches that had occurred between September 2004 and February 2006.[211] As a result, it was not prepared for the response that followed the January 2007 launch. This once again illustrates the tendency for Chinese leaders to place more emphasis on lessons from past experiences than on assessments of future realities. In a more strategic sense, previous crises with the United States had proven to Beijing the need to negotiate from a position of perceived strength. Consequently, Beijing was motivated to develop and test an ASAT capability in order to expand the depth of its repertoire of options and improve its negotiating power.

The slow response to the international protest remains a testament to the difficulty of structurally and culturally changing the institutional identity and routines. Despite having repeatedly learned the need for a flexible crisis management mechanism for resolving unanticipated conflicts, Beijing has yet to develop a system capable of agilely maneuvering through times of stress.

G. CASE #5: SICHUAN EARTHQUAKE (2008)

1. Case Details

On May 12, 2008, a devastating 7.9 earthquake occurred just north of Chengdu in Sichuan Province killing between 50,000 and 100,000 citizens and injuring many more. Buildings crumbled into heaps of rubble, trapping thousands of people for days. Due to the area's mountainous terrain and the extent of the damage to the landscape, early rescue teams were hard pressed to even hike into many of the villages. Getting substantial equipment and supplies into the region was a logistical nightmare given the poor conditions of roads. Beijing responded quickly and decisively, demonstrating improvement in handling natural disasters. In addition, in sharp contrast to prior disasters, the central leadership quickly accepted international aid including relief

[211] Kan, "China's Anti-Satellite Weapon Test," 4.

supplies from the United States, and established communication between the PLA GSD and United States Pacific Command within the first few days following the event.

The Sichuan earthquake, while being used to estimate the current capabilities of the Chinese military,[212] has not received as much attention as a case of crisis management. Although details of central leadership interactions remain extremely limited, the following analysis illustrates a few cybernetic trends in Beijing's response.

2. Case Analysis: Managing Complexity

The Chinese government, monitoring the physical condition of the country, responded to a drastic decrease in performance (measured in public health) by using its existing organizational capabilities to restore the welfare of the affected populace to an acceptable range. Collective leadership mechanisms allowed the government to mobilize all available organizational capabilities contained within the various bureaucratic institutions of the party, military, and state. While CCP General Secretary Hu Jintao presided over the Politburo meeting that provided national guidance that relief efforts were top priority, implementation was overseen by the State Council Headquarters for Resisting Earthquake and Providing Relief (led by Premier Wen Jiabao and heavily staffed by members of the Ministry of Civil Affairs), and regional coordination and execution was provided by a forward command center established by the PLA GSD and led by GSD chief Chen Bingde.[213] Present on the front lines were a variety of senior leadership figures personally representing the party, state, and military bureaucracies—including President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao. Throughout the process, the PLA included in its public statements its unswerving devotion to the CCP Central Committee, the Central Military Commission, and to Hu Jintao specifically.[214] All available institutional capabilities were devoted to the relief effort including members of every

[212] Nirav Patel, "Chinese Disaster Relief Operations: Identifying Critical Capability Gaps," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 52:1 (2009): 111–17. See also Jake Hooker, "Quake Revealed Deficiencies in China's Military," *New York Times* (2 July 2008).

[213] James Mulvenon, "The Chinese Military's Earthquake Response Leadership Team," *China Leadership Monitor* 25 (2008): 2. http://www.hoover.org/publications/clm/issues/20100024.html (accessed January 01, 2010).

[214] Ibid., 3.

military service including the specialized Second Artillery Forces. Understanding the institutional repertoire available to the central leadership can in itself explain the choices made to respond to this disaster.

3. Case Analysis: Dealing with Uncertainty

Due to the reactive nature of this particular crisis response, uncertainty in the decision-making process was naturally minimal. As opposed to other crisis cases analyzed above where multiple courses of action could feasibly be employed, in the case of the Sichuan earthquake, there was but a single choice to make—to rescue the people in need and thereby insure the continued legitimacy and survival of the CCP. There was no denying the disastrous conditions of the quake zone (as opposed to the debates over the severity of the SARS epidemic). All options available to accomplish this were present in the existing institutional capabilities of the organization. All capabilities were employed to meet this single course of action without consideration of alternatives.

4. Case Analysis: Adapting to Change

This case is similar to the other crises detailed above in that Chinese leaders drew heavily from lessons of past experiences when implementing relief procedures. Just days prior, the military junta in Burma had refused international aid or foreign media coverage following a damaging typhoon and, as a result, further isolated itself in the international community and inflicted additional suffering on its population. The CCP was resolved not to be compared to the repressive regime of Burma and responded quite the opposite way in its own time of need by welcoming international aid and foreign media to the disaster zone. In addition, Beijing likely drew from the experiences of the 2007 snowstorm as well as the 2003 SARS epidemic for lessons in the value of rapid response and military-style mass mobilization efforts. It was as if the central leadership was determined to respond to the 2008 earthquake in a way that dramatically contrasted to the half-hearted, closed-door response made to the Tangshan earthquake in 1976 in order to illustrate the transformation China has made in becoming a reformed, modernized society open to the outside world.

H. CROSS-SAMPLE OBSERVATIONS

In addition to the case-specific analyses above, a cross-sample comparison and contrast of all five cases reveals additional insight into the nature of the Chinese crisis decision-making process.

- In all five cases, there was strong evidence that the CCP central leadership determined the nature of its response and promulgated national-level guidance through a collective decision-making process based in consensus—illustrating the tendency to overcome complex issues by expanding the scale of the organization and dividing up responsibilities. All cases indicated the role of the PBSC as the key organ of power (at times, the larger Politburo was also heavily involved) and some variation of the Leading Small Group mechanism as the operational crisis management coordination center.

- In all five cases, the central leadership relied on specialized experts in both decision making and implementation roles—illustrating the effort to overcome complex issues by expanding the scope of the organization. Related to this expanded scope was the fragmentation of responsibilities and authorities both horizontally and vertically in the party, military, and state bureaucratic structures.

- Four of the five cases exhibited the tendency of Chinese leaders to severely restrict information or outside communication from reaching the central leadership decision-making process—illustrating an attempt to limit undesired uncertainty prior to and after deciding on an appropriate course of action.

- Three of the five cases included a significant period of delay prior to an official response or statement being issued by the central government. Furthermore, when the Chinese government felt it was the victim of an outside encroachment, it responded more quickly with an official response and initiated diplomatic dialogue (typically in the form of demands) than in the cases when the PRC government was connected with the perpetration of the crisis event.

- In all five cases, there were indications that the most important decisions that set the course for Chinese crisis management efforts and official Chinese policy were made early in the process with, in some cases, hardly any reliable or comprehensive information or analysis to rely upon. Of more significance was the fact that in all these cases, rather than flexibly adjusting positions in response to new or revised information as it arrived, there were harsh attempts to prevent new information from changing the agreed upon party line that was made at the outset of the crisis—a strong illustration of cybernetic methods for dealing with uncertainty when confronting complex problems.

- In all five cases, either explicit or implicit reference was made to previous experiences with similar (or perceived similar) situations when supporting certain policy positions or determining an appropriate crisis response.

- With the exception of the SARS case, there was very little change made to the organization or repertoire of institutional capabilities following a crisis. If a response is seen by the Chinese leadership as having been even partially successful in confronting similar circumstances in the past, it is likely it will be used again and little significant change will occur to the institutions or routines involved in the action. Only when a response is acknowledged as having been an obvious failure will substantial change be made to the organization. This is a strong cybernetic tendency that has important implications for what should be expected in future crises.

- In all five cases, public perception was a key variable in the minds of leaders. Public opinion (sometimes in the form of violent protest or fears thereof) was also a heavily referenced feedback channel for monitoring this variable—demonstrating the increasing pluralization of Chinese politics. It also demonstrates the cybernetic tendency for an organization to focus on those variables that most closely relate to its survival—is the case of the CCP this means continued legitimacy anchored in public acceptance of the leadership.

- At the risk of comparing apples and oranges, there were indications that despite its expanding repertoire of diplomatic organizational capabilities, the PRC is still most adept at responding to domestic crises through military-style mass mobilization strategies. It appeared less adept at managing international crises—though smaller in scale—through tactful, agile diplomacy.
- Finally, the two of these cases that involved direct confrontation with the United States (the Belgrade bombing and EP-3 collision cases) showed a similar evolution as negotiations proceeded from an initial phase characterized by steadfast demands based largely on moral arguments (a common demand was an apology) to a second phase where Chinese leaders and diplomats focused more on pragmatic interests such as economic cooperation and more readily pursued conflict resolution to a final phase where Beijing often returned to its moral arguments as a face-saving measure with the confidence that the central issue of the conflict had already been resolved. A highly desired signal to both sides during negotiations was one indicating that a thawing point had been reached—commonly manifested as an indication that Beijing was considering its core, long-term interests (which since Deng has been modernization through international economic cooperation).

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VI. CONCLUSIONS

A. KEY FINDINGS

In order to increase the chances of influencing another country's leadership to adopt a certain point of view most conducive to American interests, U.S. decision makers must first understand both its own as well as the other country's decision-making process. Although the rational approach to interpreting and predicting international relations has dominated the field for several decades, it fails to explain many of the choices made by other national governments. The intention of this study was not to disprove the validity of the rational approach in general but rather to demonstrate the enhanced applicability and explanatory value of the cybernetic approach when interpreting and predicting Beijing's decision-making behavior during times of peace and crisis.

After defining the differences between the cybernetic and rational approaches to decision making, and testing through empirical analysis of Chinese politics for the nature of three functional variables (i.e., how the leadership manages complexity, deals with uncertainty, and adapts to change), this study concludes with the following explanations and predictions regarding a cybernetic study of Beijing's decision-making process.[215]

1. Conclusions on Cybernetics

- The rational and cybernetic models are distinctly different and, consequently, exert structural and procedural influence on the decision-making process that results in dramatically different choices and implementation methods.

[215] In addition to being supported by the evidence presented in this study, another useful reference that was instrumental in developing these conclusions summarizes a series of three experimental games in comparative decision-making that occurred between 1968 and 1970 under the direction of professor John Steinbruner and the Arms Control Project at the Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA. These games each involved multiple groups (both test groups and control groups) of university students functioning in differently structured environments as "senior presidential advisors" confronted with realistic, complex international relations problems. Consistently in these experiments, students instinctively used cybernetic methods when making decisions. See John D. Steinbruner, *Some Effects of Decision Procedures on Policy Outcomes: A Series of Experiments Using Policy Games* (Cambridge, MA: Center for International Studies, MIT, 1970).

- The cybernetic model of decision making surpasses the usefulness of the rational approach in explaining the behavior of large organizations composed of many unique institutions with individual capabilities and identities.
- Empirical, scientific analysis combined with historical observation of the leadership structure and processes within a country of interest (even largely opaque authoritarian regimes) can reveal an underlying construct of cybernetic decision making.
- Since the cybernetic approach is simple, appropriate, falsifiable, operational, and valid in explaining real world decision making under complex conditions, it represents a valuable theory for expanding the existing knowledge of international relations and national security studies.

2. Conclusions on Chinese Decision Making

- As demonstrated in the two tests conducted in this study, the cybernetic model explains much about the decision-making process of the Chinese leadership organization.
- Given the cybernetic character of Chinese leadership structures and processes as well as the relative lack of intimate knowledge on individual Chinese leaders, the most applicable unit of analysis for understanding the Chinese decision-making process is the organization or institution.
- When confronted by complex problems, Beijing simplifies its decision-making process and enhances the capacity of the central leadership by expanding the scale and scope of the party's governing ability (and thereby the survivability of the CCP) through accepted, established institutional routines of collective leadership, fragmentation, and specialization.
- A problem is best understood in Chinese decision making as an indication of lower than acceptable performance in one of the strictly monitored variables critical to the survival and continued power of the CCP.

- Beijing's choice options are contained within its organizational repertoire of institutional capabilities existing at the time of the problem. Government responses in times of unanticipated crisis will likely not be tailor-made to perfectly fit the unique demands of the situation but will instead exhibit the identity, cultural norms, and routines of the institution to which it belongs.
- The effort to establish a consensus in the senior leadership is critical to the legitimacy and survival of the CCP as a whole and ultimately trumps factional differences between individual bureaucracies and institutions. Since the value of consensus is greater than individualism in the Chinese leadership, common ground on a particularly marketable perspective of the problem and most acceptable solution will be quickly sought at the beginning of a crisis. Often this common perspective will be based on a particular moral view that resonates throughout the Chinese government and populace.
- Consensus on the most accepted course of action is quickly adopted at the beginning of the crisis under incomplete or incorrect information. Afterwards, incoming information (even seemingly irrefutable, empirical evidence) that may challenge the consensus view is discouraged and suppressed as a means of minimizing uncertainty in the decision-making process.
- Due to the "satisficing" character of Beijing's search for alternatives, once a consensus is reached the search for other alternatives is extremely limited (a factor that often constricts the negotiating power and flexibility of the foreign affairs bureaucracy when responding to international demands).
- Official Chinese responses are typically directed at the most troubling aspect of the crisis. Subjective judgments of what the central issue is are quickly translated into actionable propositions for implementation. For example, Beijing's initial demand for an apology in the opening response of a crisis likely indicates that the most critical aspect of the conflict is domestically oriented (PRC public opinion) rather than internationally or security related.

- Official Chinese responses should not be expected from any institution or bureaucracy until an initial consensus is reached. If the crisis was completely unanticipated, requires a response of an institutional capability that does not exist in the organizational repertoire, involves a sensitive issue to the Chinese public, or involves the international perception that China is at fault, the delay in any response will be extended. During the beginning phase when consensus has not yet been established, neither Beijing nor anyone below Beijing with any rank or substantial influence is likely to answer the phone even if the President of the United States is on the other end of the line.

- Since Beijing is consciously restrictive in its focus on particular aspects of the problem and acceptable options, senior leaders or their respective staffs may not necessarily be attentive to signals or pressure in the particular channel of strategic communication through which Washington tries to exert influence. For example, if the Chinese leadership is most concerned about the domestic stability and public opinion of the PRC populace, increased security-related or military-related coercion from the United States likely will not have the desired outcome of deescalating the situation and an alternative approach should be adopted.

- Current or future Chinese responses to a crisis will strongly resemble past responses that enjoyed even a slight perceived element of success in similar situations. Beijing is more focused on success or failure of past performance than on future aspirations when devising an appropriate response to a crisis. Beyond explicit references by senior leaders to lessons of past situations, implicitly the identities, cultural norms, and rules of the individual institutions upon which Beijing's response options depend are derived from past performance appraisals.

- Despite post-crisis "lessons learned," institutional change in the Chinese organization typically occurs only gradually in small, incremental steps. Only when Beijing is confronted by undeniable failure in its performance will more

aggressive, substantive change occur. Many deficiencies in Chinese crisis management procedures exhibited in past periods of stress are more likely to be repeated than resolved. Consequently, it is possible to predict and preempt similar institutional routines as those witnessed from past encounters with a moderate level of confidence and accuracy.

B. SUGGESTIONS FOR FELLOW INTELLIGENCE PROFESSIONALS

In the United States Department of Defense, the task of determining the most applicable framework of national security decision making that a country of interest uses when resolving complex problems typically falls within the purview of the intelligence analyst. Understanding the leadership decision-making process in a country of interest, however, requires more than simply knowing who talks to whom, when, and where. Although this information is of critical importance, as demonstrated in the opacity exhibited by the Chinese organization, the majority of these details remain unavailable.

In the process of completing this study, it became apparent that much of the previous research only served to label the structure and describe the primary actors without examining the underlying principles that shaped decision-making behavior. All too often these studies succeeded in describing the top levels of leaders and institutions but quickly turned to broad generalizations and assessments as information ran out. Yet even with knowing who talks to whom, it could be impossible to accurately predict decision outcomes. This simply highlights the necessity for taking what is known—how organizations function—and seeking ways to accurately apply these lessons to foreign government organizations. By empirically testing for the applicability of certain organizational models (of which cybernetics is but one) in the context of a country of interest, more accurate typologies can be developed to predict outcomes.

A second trend noted in previous scholarship was the heavy use (often implicitly) of rational assumptions with very little consideration given for other, dramatically different approaches to decision making. Even within the intelligence processes that support contingency planning, "alternative" analysis, although changing the viewpoint of the adversary's desired objectives and capabilities, does not systematically change the

overall decision-making construct through which leaders arrive at their choices. Since, as illustrated in this study, as well as others, very simple alterations in the decision-making procedure can result in very different outcomes, truly alternative analysis must include decision-making processes other than simply the rational actor model in order to offer explanative and predictive inputs.[216] As one intelligence professional remarked in a text which has become a mandatory read for many in the community, "because these mind-sets or models serve as a "screen" or "lens" through which analysts perceive foreign developments, research to determine the nature of this "lens" may contribute as much to accurate judgments as does research focused more directly on the foreign areas themselves."[217]

C. AREAS FOR ADDITIONAL STUDY

There are several potentially fruitful ways to expand the applicability of a cybernetic approach to Chinese decision making to include a variety of more general or narrower areas of emphasis. Here are but a few avenues that materialized in the process of completing this study.

In a general sense, many analysts of Chinese politics have assessed that Beijing will ultimately be forced to adopt substantial political change (possibly be forced to even embrace popular electoral democracy) as China's economic and social spheres become increasingly more complex. However, as this study has illustrated, where the rational model becomes more inefficient in managing complexity, the cybernetic model overcomes complexity through organization and expanded inclusion of simple, specialized institutions. Additional organizational studies can potentially provide support for arguments that the CCP may be more resilient to change than some estimate.

More narrowly, there is a wealth of helpful research that can be completed by focusing the cybernetic approach and methods used here on specific PRC institutions in

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[216] Steinbruner, *Some Effects of Decision Procedures*, 129.

[217] Richards J. Heurer Jr., *The Psychology of Intelligence Analysis* (Langley, VA: Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, 1999): 178. https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/book-and-monographs/psychology-of-intelligence-analysis/index.html (accessed February 20, 2010).

order to identify specific routines and rules that explain and predict the manner in which these individual entities, when "turned on" by the central government, will use their respective repertoires of capabilities to complete their mission and guarantee their institutional survival.

Additionally, the cybernetic model can be tailored to better fit the specific case of Chinese politics to include, in particular, an analysis of the role that public opinion plays in a cybernetic organization. As many of these crisis cases have illustrated, Beijing is increasingly more alert to public perception and in many cases finds the continued legitimacy of the CCP tied to this variable. Understanding how this can affect the cybernetic process or viewing public opinion as a cybernetic actor may provide additional insight into Beijing's domestic constraints.

Finally, in addition to the content analysis and comparative tests conducted in this study, other quantitative and qualitative methods and evidence can provide new insights and support for a cybernetic view of Chinese politics that will prove useful to the development of operational typologies for improving the ability of the United States intelligence community to interpret and predict Beijing's decision-making behavior.

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